

# 마야&마루

파그마의 후예

MAYA & MARU GAME FANTASY STORY

박새날 게임 판타지 장편소설

마루&  
마야

# Overgeared

– 템빨 –

- Part 17 -

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# Chapter 751

〔Satisfy's opening ceremony held in Tokyo has the largest number of tourists in history.〕

〔The Tokyo Dome has heated up. The 1,500 participants from 50 countries have determination on their faces and the crowd is giving them an enthusiastic cheer.〕

〔The National Competition is significant. It's an opportunity for the players to gain wealth and honor at the same time. For the people of each country supporting them, it's a chance to get a big buff.〕

〔I wonder what countries and participants will play a big role this year.〕

〔I'm looking forward to the birth of a new star.〕

〔Won't it be hard for a new star to emerge because the existing top talents are so big?〕

〔Don't forget that the world is wide. I believe there are countless hermits who haven't been discovered. Ares and Agnus... People like them.〕

Satisfy could be described as a game enjoyed by the whole world and the size of the National Competition expanded every year. As a result, the attitude of the players became more serious. It was because the size of the compensation grew with the size of the competition.

The gold medal winner received an item equivalent to the legendary rank or a material equivalent to the myth rank. The silver medal winner would receive an item equivalent to the unique rating or a material equivalent to the legendary rating. Bronze medal winners were able to obtain items equivalent to the epic rating or a material equivalent to the unique rating.

At first glance, there seemed to be no merit to the bronze medal. But there were parts that shouldn't be overlooked. There was no explicit mention of 'no growth type items' in the compensation description. That's right. Becoming a medal winner meant that a person could get a growth type item with a minimum epic rating. Most growth items starting at the epic rating were able to grow to the legendary rating.

'I will surely win a medal!'

As Chris, the 1st ranked player on the unified rankings stood on the podium, the eyes of the participants from all over the world were blazing. Most of them were feeling nervous.

Grid, Kraugel, and Jishuka had won rewards equivalent to a gold medal from the Battlefield event a few days ago. The fact that these powerful people went one step further placed a great pressure on the others. They were nervous because the walls they had to cross had become even higher.

'In particular, Grid's item making is a problem.'

The use of high rated materials didn't necessarily mean that high rated items would be produced. The production result relied on probability.

But people perceived that Grid was an exception. They speculated that as a legendary blacksmith, he could produce myth rated items with legendary rated production materials. They were concerned that if Grid and the Overgeared members secured a large number of medals, the strength of the Overgeared Guild would rise exponentially.

Of course, it was a big misunderstanding.

'Should I get a finished product?'

Grid originally wanted the by-products of the sacred creatures. They were in the same class as the Red Phoenix Breath. Grid's goal was to create a second or third masterpiece like the Red Phoenix Bow and Enlightenment Sword.

However, it didn't mean a myth rated item would be created if he used a myth rated material. He wasn't able to produce any myth rated items when he used the by-products of Great Demon Belial to make items for the Overgeared members. If he was lucky then he made legendary rated items. If he was unlucky, there were times he made unique rated items.

It meant Grid could fail.

'On the other hand, if I can get a legendary growth type item then I will surely acquire a myth rated item.'

After the opening ceremony was over.

Jishuka approached Grid, who was still trying to decide on the compensation. Her reddish hair and golden skin was absolutely charming under the sunshine.

"I will ask for a Red Phoenix Breath. Grid, I hope you will make a good item that has synergy with the Red Phoenix Bow."

"I can't unconditionally create a myth rated item using the Red Phoenix Breath. Is that okay?"

"I believe in you."

"..."

Grid's heart thumped. Jishuka's beautiful face wasn't the only reason. The absolute trust she gave Grid filled his heart. Thanks to her, Grid also gained courage.

"Okay... I will get the Blue Dragon Breath."

Then.

"Once I win two more medals, I will get the White Tiger's Breath and the Black Tortoise's Breath. Jishuka, I'll cheer you on as well."

"Yes... I'll always be cheering for you. Thank you."

Jishuka's smile became more beautiful. Grid's presence itself was a great strength for her. Had she ever been so dependent on someone since being born? She was happy. She willingly wanted to stay with Grid.

"...So we have to get married."

"Huh? What? I couldn't hear because it's so noisy"

"Ah, no. It's okay if you didn't hear me. I was talking to myself."

Jishuka's face turned red. She was more nervous when facing Grid in reality, unlike Satisfy.

"Grid." Another beauty arrived as there was a friendly atmosphere between the two people. Unlike Jishuka, who was as bright as the sun, Yura was like the moon. "The events that other players hope to participate in had been released."

Yura's cold eyes examined Jishuka. She didn't like Jishuka, who was always dressed in cleavage revealing clothing.

"Everybody is waiting in the waiting room. Let's go."

The participants had three hours to change after seeing the hopes of others. It was necessary to have a meeting to confirm the hopes of other players so that better results could be created. Jishuka's bit her lip as she saw Yura grab Grid's wrist. She kept her smile but there was clear hostility in her eyes.

"Ah, it's good to be on the same team."

"It's better than living in distant lands."

"If your relationship is good just because you live in the same country, shouldn't you be nervous? My Korean immigration project is currently in progress."

"I'm wondering if you can easily move to another country when you have a large amount of debt. Surely you aren't dreaming of being an illegal citizen?"

"Uh...! I will get a gold medal in this National Competition and get rid of my debt!"

"I don't know. We will probably be competing in the same events."

"Are you going to interfere? Bah, okay! Feel free to come! I'll see how great you are after coming back from hell!"

"Will you be able to breathe?"

*Pajik!*

*Paijijik!*

Once Jishuka's hot gaze met Yura's cool eyes, the air froze and it was like electric currents were flowing. Grid looked puzzled as he stood between two girls who showed hostility to each other.

'Why are they like this?'

Grid didn't know what the men around him were feeling right now.

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This year there were a total of 27 events. There was no rule that a country had to participate in all events. The players from each country had to win medals by participating in their own event or events with relatively low competition. The reason why the S.A. Group revealed the hopes of other players was to create more diverse strategies and variables.

Thanks to this, the players had a headache. Were the players actually participating in these events or were they lying? The players held a meeting to discuss the various possibilities.

"Grid, what are you going to participate in?"

The South Korean team's waiting room.

The players' eyes were focused on Grid. It was natural to give the right to decide to the person with the highest winning rate.

"Um..."

Grid's worries increased as he looked at the events the US team wanted to participate in. It was due to Kraugel's desired events.

"PvP is natural but what is saint sword drawing?"

Saint sword drawing had been a steady event in the National Competition for three years. But it was classified as a relatively minor event. The event was complex and slow, making it less popular.

"Isn't this a game where the brain needs to be used extensively?"

That's right. Participants in the saint sword drawing event had to first check the story of the saint sword. Then they would follow the hidden hints in the story to figure out what the saint sword wanted. Then in order to become a person that the saint sword wanted, various types of quests were carried out. There were combat-oriented quests

as well as puzzle quests. It wasn't an event that people with shallow knowledge could participate in. It was an event that wasn't suitable for Grid at all.

"Is Kraugel really going to participate in this?"

These were just the 'desired' events. Grid was convinced that Kraugel wouldn't actually participate in the saint sword drawing event.

"Why is this guy giving a fake...? Um, what type of event will Kraugel participate in?"

Grid wanted to compete in both events with Kraugel. It wasn't just because of Damian's press conference. He had a bigger desire after losing in PvP last year. Last year, Kraugel took a gold medal for him so Grid wanted to take two gold medals from Kraugel. He was trying to predict Kraugel's events when Yura and Peak Sword told him.

"Kraugel is a clever person. There are few people better suited for saint sword drawing."

"Kraugel's current level is low and he can't exert his full combat power, so saint sword drawing is perfect from Kraugel's perspective. He can cover his lacking combat power with intelligence."

"...Kraugel is smart?"

"Of course. Think of his actions when he was the first ranked player. They were extraordinary."

"..."

No, then he was really going to participate in the saint sword drawing event? Grid asked cautiously, "What if I participated here?"

"...Don't do it."

"..."

Maybe this year's revenge could only be done in PvP. Grid felt both regret and relief. In fact, there was no guarantee that he could win against Kraugel.

"Then let's go to an event where I will unconditionally win a gold medal."

What event was it? Of course...

"Then I shall participate in PvP and blacksmithing."

People might laugh at him participating in the blacksmithing event. They would say he was blatantly avoiding Kraugel.

'Well, they can mock me all they want.'

Those people would mock him no matter what he did. The determined Grid watched Yura's choices. Then he was surprised. It was because Yura chose the target processing and saint sword drawing event. Target processing was a major event that was famous for having as many strong players as PvP. In addition, didn't she see that Kraugel would participate in the saint sword drawing event? Why did she want to take the risk?

Yura explained to the confused Grid and players.

"We have to compete against those who are likely to win gold medals in order to boost South Korea's ranking."

He understood her heart.

"But what about the odds? Yura, you are one of our greatest powers. The blow will be big if you miss out on gold medals. Don't fight a losing battle... Oof! Oof!"

Grid blocked Peak Sword's mouth. Then he smiled at Yura's unwavering eyes.

"Have you become really strong in hell?" She could even match Kraugel. "I'll trust you and cheer you on."

Grid had never seen Yura bluff. He didn't doubt her confidence.

"Thank you. I will return your faith."

Yura replied with a smile. She looked so beautiful that Grid blushed.

Then Eat Spicy Jokbal spoke up, "Me and my friends will participate in two team events."

"Ohh, that's good!"

Peak Sword barely tore away from Grid and cried out enthusiastically. He was full of expectations for Dungeon Master Eat Spicy Jokbal's power in the team events. The world might expect South Korea's overall ranking to be at the bottom this year but Peak Sword thought differently.

'South Korea will get the top position this year!'

There was a person filled with hopeful expectations.

"I'll try to get at least one bronze medal."

It was beast master Toon who had been guarding Grid's side since coming to South Korea last year.

"Puhahaha! Hooray South Korea!"

Peak Sword was dancing with excitement. He didn't even know what events he was participating in.

# Chapter 752

〔The two billion Satisfy players all over the world! It is the 3rd National Competition that you have been waiting for long for! Finally! Start!!! We will now watch the first event!〕

“Waaaaaaaaah!”

The event that was the prelude to the 3rd National Competition was the saint sword drawing. The public originally wasn't interested in saint sword drawing, but this year was different. It was because there were many people waiting for the National Competition which was held three months later than usual. In addition, Sword Saint Kraugel's name was on the list of participants.

-*We can see Kraugel on the opening day! This is completely exciting!*

-*The opening is with God Kraugel... He's the main character... ☠ ☠*

-*Isn't it a game where the person who draws out the saint sword first is the winner? Since he's a Sword Saint, he will surely be picked by the saint sword. Will Kraugel wins as soon he starts?*

-*Ey, that doesn't matter. Otherwise it wouldn't be a match.*

Saint sword drawing was based on the famous Arthurian legend, the sword stuck in the rock. It had the simple rule in which the person who pulled the sword out of the rock first would win. But the process wasn't easy. In order to draw the saint sword, certain conditions had to be met. The participants had to break through the missions with strength, intelligence, and competence. It was very difficult for the participants because they had to be proficient in both literary and martial arts, and the public's interest wasn't easy to attract. It was inevitably less popular than other stimulating events.

Due to that, few people participated in saint sword drawing. In the 2nd National Competition, this event was reduced to anonymous rankers. However, this year Sword Saint Kraugel and Demon Slayer Yura would participate in saint sword drawing.

People's expectations were heightened.

"It will be thrilling to watch the saint sword drawing!"

"By the way. Kraugel is a Sword Saint and well suited to saint sword drawing, but why is Yura participating? Can't she play separate events?"

"Hrmm... Is it because it's reliable to secure a medal based on the low competition? Just one medal will be invaluable to South Korea, who will be ranked at the bottom."

"It's a big blow to her that hell running was abolished due to equality issues."

"She picked out saint sword drawing but ended up meeting Kraugel. She has no luck. I'm sorry for her"

One of the best players in the Great Demon Belial raid was Yura. However, it was speculated that her abilities were only powerful against a great demon. It was true. Until a few months ago.

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Bruton Island, the stage for saint sword drawing, was largely divided into three sections.

First, there was the safety zone. It was impossible to PvP in the safety zone. Players couldn't attack each other in here. The 'sword in the rock' was placed in the center of the safety zone.

Secondly, there was the route zone. PvP was possible, but you would be classified as a criminal when attacking a player and could be attacked by guardians. It was a neutral zone where players could be killed. There were villages where NPCs gave clues and shrines which increased resource recovery. There were a total of nine village son Bruton Island and the distance between villages was around three kilometers. The location of the shrines weren't marked on the mini-map.

Finally, there was the chaotic zone. It was a chaotic zone where PvP was allowed without any restrictions. Apart from the safety zone and route zone, all of Bruton Island was considered a chaotic zone. Players in the chaotic zone had to pay attention at all times, since it was filled with many types of monsters, including named bosses.

{A sword isn't important.}

"...?"

The center of Bruton Island. The 42 people participating in saint sword drawing fell into confusion at the beginning. A sword was stuck at a right angle in the sparkling marble. The sentence 'a sword isn't important' floating at the bottom of the saint sword made it difficult for them. No, why was the verse decorating the sword denying the necessity of a sword?

"This isn't right?"

The participants' minds went blank but not all of them.

'Does it mean it wants a master who doesn't rely on it?'

'Does it mean to not become stronger by holding the sword, but to be an inherently strong master?'

Kraugel and Yura immediately knew the meaning of the sentence.

*Supak!*

The two people moved at the same time. What did it mean to prove they were 'strong?' It was simple. Combat. Kraugel and Yura judged this and moved out of the safe zone towards the chaotic zone. In the process, they faced each other.

*Surung!*

Kraugel discovered Yura entering the forest opposite him and wielded his weapon. It was a silver weapon made from the bones of a dragon, White Fang.

'She's dangerous.'

Yura had been one of the 10 strongest players in the world for a long time. Kraugel acknowledged her skills and was naturally wary. He knew it could be a disaster if he didn't get rid of her in the beginning.

*Supak!*

Just before Yura hid in a shady forest. Kraugel used White Light Steps and aimed at her. He used the refraction of the sunlight to enter a stealth state.

"Ah! Yura!!"

The crowd cried out. The crowd was sure that the beautiful woman would be eliminated at the beginning of the event.

"Kraugel is a bloodless person with no tears!"

"That cruel side is good! Win Kraugel!"

Some people criticized Kraugel for trying to kill his biggest contender while others cheered him on. The premise behind both was common. Yura would die soon. That's right. The crowd expected that Kraugel would easily beat Yura. Kraugel's PvP ability was superior and his footwork was quick because he added stealth. Yura didn't notice Kraugel's approach and would suffer a critical injury. Most of the Korean representatives monitoring the game from the waiting room had the same idea.

"There are very few people who can handle Kraugel's power. It's the end the moment she allowed him access."

Peak Sword bit his nails. He prayed that Yura would see Kraugel's approach and pull out her gun. The only way for her to survive was to block Kraugel's approach in advance. He thought there was no other answer. But Grid was different.

'Will you show me?'

Grid still believed in her. The confidence expressed by his dear colleague.

'Have strength!'

Yura had been stuck in hell for several months. She must've grown. Now she had to prove the value of her efforts. If she failed to prove it, she would be more shocked than anyone else.

Grid cheered on Yura.

'I will repay your faith.'

Maybe it was a coincidence or faith. Yura was reminded of her promise to Grid. Then.

*Supak!*

The fight went different than what everyone expected. The moment that Kraugel approached Yura.

“Hell Leap.”

Yura responded like she knew he was here. Her body was surrounded by a red light as she used the skill and disappeared without a trace.

‘Stealth?’

It was impossible for a person to disappear unless it was a teleport magic. In addition, teleport type magic belonged entirely to magicians. Based on this, Kraugel judged that Yura’s disappearance in front of him was simply a gimmick. He didn’t panic and just kept up the trajectory of the sword.

It was at the point where Yura had been standing. Kraugel expected Yura to bleed and reveal herself again.

But.

*Wuuong.*

“...?!”

There wasn’t the sensation of cutting anything. White Fang left a faint afterglow in the air and Kraugel raised his eyebrows. At the same time.

*Suruk.*

A small black hole was created behind Kraugel. There were no precursors and no sound, so Kraugel couldn’t notice it. Then Yura emerged from the black hole.

“?!”

After hearing the sound of a collar rustling, Kraugel sensed the change and reflexively swung White Fang back.

*Puk!*

Kraugel wasn't a monster. Unlike what people thought, he didn't have eyes in the back of his head. The White Fang that he swung back didn't hit Yura. The problem was that his super super Sensitivity detected Yura too late. On the other hand, Yura precisely pierced Kraugel's back.

"...!!!"

"!!!!"

【!!!!】

The players, the crowd watching the game, the commentators and the viewers were shocked, their mouths dropping open. Above all, the one who was most surprised was Kraugel himself. He was caught. It wasn't the same as when he fought Lauel and Pon on Battlefield.

This was Satisfy. Here, Kraugel was a complete presence. He was the sky above the sky. An absolute person. Now he lost to a person in a frontal confrontation. It was the first time he'd experienced this.

*Hwiririk!*

While Kraugel was feeling confused, Yura reclaimed her sword and spun. It was an elegant movement like a swan.

*Swaeeeeek!*

The sword with a centrifugal force pierced Kraugel. It was steadfast swordsmanship based on her experience in hell.

*Kaang!*

Kraugel barely managed to defend.

Now that he was face to face with Yura, his super sensitivity passive was active. He used White Fang to fend off Yura's attack and showed his strength. The new acquired 'Weapon Swallowing' of a Sword Saint caused White Fang to interlock with Yura's sword. Due to this, Yura's upper body leaned forward and her face neared Kraugel's.

The distance between the two of them was so close that it wouldn't be strange if their lips touched.

"Ohhhhh!"

"It is Kraugel instead of Grid!"

The crowd was excited at the beautiful sight. However, the atmosphere between Kraugel and Yura was cold. Their faces were expressionless as they whispered to each other.

"I didn't know I would be subjected to this type of defeat by someone other than Grid."

"Don't take him for granted. Youngwoo-ssi is the only one special to me."

"Hah...?"

*Tatang!*

Yura lost her balance due to Kraugel's sword swallowing. People judged that Kraugel would win. After allowing a counterattack from Yura, they thought Kraugel would overpower her. However, that wasn't it. Yura's left hand held a gun and she pulled the trigger. The speed at which her bullet flew was slightly faster than Kraugel's sword.

"Kuk...!"

Kraugel couldn't escape from the bullets shot at close range. Blood flowed from his forehead and his eyes reddened. He could see Yura with his blurred vision. She held a sword in one hand and a gun in the other. She obtained the Demon Slayer 'Use Both Hands' passive when she reached level 300.

"...Interesting."

Kraugel allowed two attacks in a row and was surrounded by a blue sword energy. Now he recognized Yura as a 'competitor.' She was on the same level as Grid. But he couldn't compete with Yura's power.

"Hell Leap."

Yura judged that it was disadvantageous to face a Sword Saint head on and

immediately disappeared. Her movements that disappeared into a black hole and reappearing in another place couldn't be pursued by Kraugel's super sensitivity. It was like she leapt into space itself. The moment she entered the hole, she was completely removed from his senses. There was no precursor to the creation of the black hole.

“...Demon Slayer.”

Kraugel muttered as he gazed at the back of the distant Yura. His feelings were similar to when he first faced Grid. And...

“Waaaaaaaah!”

“Yura! Yura!! Yura!!!”

"Ah!! My goddess has finally returned!!"

Yura, who had been wandering after becoming a legendary class, regained her old reputation. It was a splendid return.

# Chapter 753

*Duk.*

A black object fell and dirtied the marble floor. It was the chocolate pudding that Grid was eating.

“...”

The South Korean team's waiting room. Grid had lost his soul. He didn't even notice that the expensive pudding he normally didn't buy had fallen to the ground.

“God Grid? Hey, God Grid!”

Peak Sword noticed Grid's unusual state. He grabbed Grid's shoulder and randomly shook it. He couldn't help feeling worried. Among the many snacks available in the waiting room, Grid had only picked the most expensive chocolate pudding. He had already eaten six consecutive ones!

“Hey! I told you! I told you it was dangerous if you consumed so much sugar at once! But you...! You just said that freebies are good...! Hey! God Grid!! Wake up! Look into my eyes!”

‘...It's different from the image I imagined.’

The representatives' images of Overgeared King Grid and Peak Sword was very big. In particular, Grid and Peak Sword were heroes and idols to the young rankers participating on the Korean team this year. They imagined a noble image. However, reality was the exact opposite of their imagination. They seemed like neighborhood idiots.

But why weren't they disappointed? Grid and Peak Sword had no authority? Well, it was better to be friendly and comfortable.

“It's okay. I was just thinking about something else.”

In the turmoil, Grid belatedly regained his mind and focused on the screen again. He

watched Yura hunt monsters and gather the ‘proof of strength.’

“Really... Really strong.”

In fact, he hadn’t expressed it, but Grid had been worried about Yura. She had been in the top position. How hard would it be for her to be in a slump for more than a year after becoming a Demon Slayer?

“Demon Slayer...”

A conditional class that exerted exceptional power in certain conditions. It was a good fit for ordinary people like Grid. However, it was poison for a versatile person like Yura. It was a poison that regulated Yura’s talents, who could act in various fields. Grid worried that Yura had been regretting her choice.

‘...I would certainly regret it.’

But she didn’t. She walked alone without relying on anyone. Then she descended to hell. This was the result. Yura succeeded in returning as a dominant power in the National Competition.

“Good work.”

Grid was someone who always tried. He knew how much Yura had done for this moment. Thus, he was in awe.

“God Grid...”

Peak Sword handed a tissue to Grid with a solemn expression. There was no handkerchief.

“Wipe your mouth...”

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[The crystal skeleton has been defeated.]

[All the Proofs of Strength have been gathered. Visit Andrew Village and meet the chief. He will give you the second version of the ‘Saint Sword’s Song.’]

‘I shouldn’t overlap with Kraugel.’

Had Kraugel already collected all the proofs? Or was he still at the collecting stage? According to Yura’s calculations, it was naturally the former.

‘I might meet Kraugel if I go directly to the village.’

She didn’t want to admit it, but even if they were both legendary classes, Sword Saint Kraugel’s combat ability was much better. The pressure that Yura felt when she was hit a while ago was considerable. If Yura had pulled the gun a bit later then she was likely to be hit. Kraugel’s strength was beyond what she had expected.

‘If only Hell Leap was a bit more stable...’

It was the trump card that Yura acquired by clearing a hidden Demon Slayer quest. Unfortunately, it was difficult to use. It was a skill that temporarily moved the user’s body ‘somewhere’ in hell. No one could guarantee where the caster would fall. In the worst case, she could fall where a great demon was or directly onto hell fire.

In fact, 30 minutes ago, Yura used Hell Leap during her confrontation with Kraugel and fell right in front of the castle of the 15th great demon. She was caught by a red monster guarding the gates and even the legendary passive couldn’t completely resist the ‘absolute petrification.’ The agility of her body fell significantly.

“Hah.”

Yura couldn’t help letting out a sigh. She lamented being weaker than Kraugel despite also being a legend. Her level was even higher. She had passed level 300 before the start of the National Competition, while Kraugel was still in the mid-200s. Even so, Yura had a low chance of winning in a frontal confrontation.

‘...No, it’s an excuse.’

Class wasn’t the only important thing. The grim reality was proven when the normal class Kraugel had defeated Grid.

‘Hurry.’ Acting in front of Kraugel wasn’t her first choice. She would miss the gold medal if she kept avoiding Kraugel. Then there would be no meaning in participating

in the saint sword drawing. 'I can't avoid a fight with Kraugel.'

Yura realized the cold reality and ran to Andrew Village. She wished that Grid's support would bring her good luck.

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"Ah, they met again."

"Yura is pitiful."

"Isn't it really dangerous this time?"

It was two and a half hours since saint sword drawing started. By the time most participants acquired the third verse of the Saint Sword's Song, Kraugel and Yura were on the last verse and encountered each other again. It was their sixth clash. No matter how much Yura was damaged, she kept chasing after Kraugel.

As the confrontations continued, Kraugel's side overwhelmed Yura. Kraugel's combat adaptability was unmatched. In the repeated battles, he grasped the unique characteristics of a Demon Slayer and reversed them completely to neutralize Yura. Now it was hard for Yura to resist. The only path she could choose was to retreat from Kraugel's swordsmanship. She didn't look back when she met Kraugel and used Hell Leap.

In the process...

"Heok! What?"

"Now she is summoning a demonkin?"

The people were startled at the sight of Yura. She disappeared with a red light and reappeared through a black hole with something on her shoulder. People naturally assumed it was a demonkin that she summoned. But the demonkin was biting her shoulder.

'What?'

The commentators, crowd, and even Kraugel was confused at the situation. They couldn't understand why Yura had ended up like this. But they noticed it within a few

minutes.

'No way, has she been going to hell every time she uses the skill?'

It had been like this from the beginning. When she disappeared and reappeared, Yura often seemed injured or affected by a status condition. It was obvious that the teleportation skill she used was different from normal instantaneous movements.

"Isn't this skill too dangerous?"

Kraugel asked as if he knew everything. But Yura's expression didn't change at all.

"I don't know what you mean."

*Sakak-!*

Yura cut off the demonkin biting at her shoulder and pointed her gun at Kraugel. She had to open the distance and recover enough resources to make full use of Hell Leap. Kraugel read her intentions and tried to narrow the distance, but she was the sky above the sky for female users. She didn't allow him to easily narrow the distance.

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"Oh! Kraugel is a completely bad guy!"

Grid was extremely agitated. It was because Kraugel hunting Yura instead of proceeding with the quests was too hateful.

"Can't you share a gold medal and silver medal? Why are you acting like you want to eat everything?"

"It's because he acknowledges Yura's skills. There's a chance he might miss the gold medal if he spares her."

Like the other player, Eat Spicy Jokbal was concentrating on the game. Viola, the woman in a hanbok sitting next to him nodded as if she agreed.

"That lady, she's too strong."

It was obvious that Kraugel was one level higher. The problem was that so far, only

Grid had managed to go against Kraugel. In people's eyes, the difference in skills between the two people was minimal.

"But what the hell is that Hell Leap?"

"Yes. I thought it was simply a fraudulent movement skill, but now a monster has come out."

Yura once again retreated. She escaped from Kraugel and lurked in the forest, escaping from a great crisis for now. Grid's throat became parched as he felt relief. He was just grabbing a soda when a security guard approached him.

"That... A guest has come."

"Guest? Who is it?"

Who would come to the South Korean team while the National Competition event was going on? The security guard replied to the confused Grid.

"Panmir of the US team."

"...?"

The first ranked blacksmith since Satisfy opened. He was the person who made Grid participate in the blacksmithing event in last year's National Competition.

'Is he coming to ask me to participate this year?'

After thinking about last year's incident, Grid laughed and left the waiting room. Panmir was an opponent difficult to ignore. Grid respected his position but didn't fear him. Grid was familiar with Panmir's craftsmanship. He understood the sense of deprivation Panmir felt because Grid was a legendary blacksmith. Panmir was an opponent Grid had to be careful of in many ways.

"It has been a while."

Grid discovered Panmir in the hallway and spoke first. Panmir had more grey hair than last year. But his solid body and strong eyes didn't make him look old. He looked like Khan would've 15 years younger.

"I'll speak bluntly." Panmir responded to Grid's greeting and immediately got to the subject. "This year, I will beat you."

"..."

No, this was the only reason why he came? It was disturbing his day with this silly thing. Grid couldn't hide his displeasure and frowned. Panmir added, "Even if I win, it doesn't necessarily mean I'm better than you. Your craftsmanship and perseverance in manually making each item is naturally better than me. Nevertheless, there's a reason I can say that I will beat you."

Panmir stopped speaking and pulled out a thin booklet. It was the book that described the rules for the blacksmithing event.

"It's due to the manipulation of the organizers."

From this year on, the rules of the blacksmithing event changed. Last year, all participants made the 'same item' with the 'same design.' But this year, the participants could make the item they wanted with any design. The most important change was the victory criteria.

Unlike last year, where the 'comprehensive value' was judged based on the item's ability, this year's blacksmith event only looked at the 'rating' of the item. The criteria was changed so that those who produced unconditionally high rated items would receive good evaluations. Growth type items were no exception. It didn't matter if the item could grow to the legendary rating. If it was a normal rating when it was finished, the gold medal would be lost.

Panmir spoke with straightforward eyes.

"Haven't you already noticed? The reason why the rules and evaluation criteria for the blacksmithing event changed this year was to keep you in check."

Even if items of the same rank were produced, Grid's items would have higher average stats. If the criteria for evaluating items were just stats, the winner of the blacksmithing event would be Grid.

This was why the organizers changed the evaluation criteria for items.

"Changing the rules to keep a certain player in check... In your position, I would feel

that it's unfair."

"What do you want to say?"

"I want to tell you not to take it personally if you lose to me in this event. You aren't worse than me. You were just defeated by the organizers."

"..."

What type of confidence was this? The biggest problem was that Panmir was speaking with good intentions. Grid was forced to shut up because he was too embarrassed to reply.

Panmir smiled bitterly at him.

"I achieved level 280 and completed three hidden quests. Now I have a 0.01% chance of producing legendary rated items. In addition, my items will be at least epic rated... I can make crazily fraudulent items. So prepare your heart. Then I'm going."

After a while, Panmir left and Grid was left alone scratching his head.

"The conclusion is that you are worried about me?"

He knew for a long time that Panmir was a person with excellent craftsmanship. But Grid didn't know Panmir was such a gracious and sensitive person.

'I'm sorry...' '

Grid wouldn't show mercy to Panmir. At present, Panmir could never imagine that Grid was holding back a surprise card.

# Chapter 754

The stronger the predator, the more prideful they were. They weren't cautious when hunting small rabbits. Patience and strength were the basics. It was important to do their best when competing with the same beast.

*Clink!*

The second half of saint sword drawing. Kraugel was doing his best to stop Yura. He was very wary of her since she was also qualified to draw the saint sword.

'There's a slight difference in movement speed due to the difference in basic stats. I need to deal with her before entering the safety zone.'

Kraugel hadn't achieved level 300 before entering the National Competition. His stats failed to reach the third awakening and were generally lacking. He needed to be tenacious to make up for this. Kraugel placed his hands on the sheath at his waist.

He aimed for Yura's predicted path and drew White Fang. It was Space Sword, one of the ultimate skills of a Sword Saint.

*Supaak!*

"...!"

Kraugel's silver-coloured sword cut the earth, rivers, trees, rocks, mountains, and sky. The landscape in his field of view was cut in two. All except for one thing. It was Yura. The moment Kraugel's sword reached her, she used Hell Leap to make Kraugel's technique useless.

-*Wow...!*

-*How does she match the timing like that?*

-*I have goosebumps.*

The crowd and viewers had already been impressed by Yura several times. From what

they saw, there was only a difference in class between Kraugel and Yura. People thought that if the Demon Slayer class had the ability to fight the Sword Saint class, she wouldn't be in the position of a fugitive.

But that was just their perspective. Kraugel dominated Yura in all ways, albeit subtly.

"You can't run."

"...!!!"

Yura was surprised when she emerged from a black hole. It was because Kraugel stood before her.

'He read the path?' Yura noticed. 'It's my mistake!'

The problem was that she chose the shortest route to reach the saint sword as soon as possible. Kraugel read her thoughts. The cause of her defeat was a failure to overcome her anxiety.

*Sakak-!*

A white flash projected towards Yura's trembling eyes.

[You have suffered 5,900 damage.]

White Fang descended towards Yura again.

*Sakak-!*

*Chukakakakak!*

Kraugel didn't lose momentum after hitting Yura once. He used tricky orbits to deal with Yura.

"Ugh...!"

Yura's vision kept flashing red. She attempted to defend against Kraugel's attacks but it didn't work. Kraugel perfectly analyzed her behavior patterns and his super

sensitivity supported his analysis. Yura had only one option left to counterattack.

*Tang!*

*Tang tang!*

As Yura was caught in a storm of swords and bled out, she aimed her magic gun at Kraugel. But Kraugel read her gaze and the direction the muzzle was pointing in, moving in advance to avoid the bullets. In the end, eight of the ten bullets shot by Yura were deflected. On the other hand, Yura allowed seven out eight hits by Kraugel. The difference in health between the two people greatly widened.

〔It seems to be over.〕

〔Ah, Player Yura is really miserable. After all this, she's missing the medal.〕

Yura's performance had been dazzling through saint sword drawing. She quickly met the requirements of the saint sword with a good strategy and overcome the difficulties experienced in the process with her strength and wits. The commentators and the crowd had no doubt that she would win a medal for her country. But now Kraugel from the United States was about to trample on Yura and South Korea's dreams.

〔As you all know, the players in South Korea are very shallow. Apart from Grid, Yura, Peak Sword, and Toon, all participating players are unknown.〕

〔The experts guess that apart from Grid and Yura, the other players can only obtain silver medals at most.〕

〔It's desperate news for South Korea that Yura is being eliminated without winning a single medal.〕

〔It's a pity. The Korean people will feel a great deal of heartache.〕

The commentators were telling the truth. The rules were revised so that one player could only participate in two events. The elimination of Yura was a painful loss for South Korea. Even if Grid won two gold medals, South Korea would stay at the bottom of the rankings as expected. Then the Korean players wouldn't receive any buffs.

“Meteor Sword.”

*Kwa kwang!*

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

Kraugel's sword fell like a meteor and continuously struck Yura's injured body. Yura used her skills to resist, but her health was currently at the bottom while Kraugel's was close to being full. Kraugel was several times stronger than last year after becoming a Sword Saint and was on a different level from Yura. At this point, people thought the winner of the one on one PvP was determined. They started speculating about the results of the events that hadn't yet started.

Then Kraugel prepared to deal the final blow to Yura.

'End it.'

Kraugel decided after checking Yura's health gauge. He precisely calculated Yura's health and defense figures during the course of the battle and used a charging skill. He prepared to deal a blow to Yura's heart while simultaneously opening the distance, in order to avoid a counterattack from Yura in her immortal state.

"Jajinmori."

*Peeok!*

A secret technique obtained from the East Continent. It was a kick that unfolded without any preliminary movements, striking the enemy and pushing him away. He kicked Yura's abdomen. At the same time, Yura's health was depleted, she entered the immortal state and fell far away from Kraugel. Kraugel naturally didn't approach her. He judged that he could prevent her from accessing the safety zone during her five seconds of immortality.

"Huhut."

In this desperate situation, Yura laughed. Kraugel's actions were within the range that she anticipated. Since she was far away from Kraugel, she cast a spell that took some time to use.

"Hell Summoning."

"...?!"

*Kurururung!*

The Demon Slayer class exerted great influence in hell and operated with a penalty on this middle world. It was too unreasonable to call it a legendary class when it couldn't exert its abilities outside of hell. That's why the skill set involved a hell summoning. It was a field magic that allowed a Demon Slayer to show 100% of their abilities by transferring over a certain random area of hell.

*Shaaaaah-*

A dark curtain fell. A radius of 1km around Yura was flooded with demonic energy and turned black. It was the moment when the bright Bruton Island was contaminated.

〔Hup...!〕

The world was astonished. Hell Summoning was a unique magic used by Great Demon Belial! How could a player use it?!!

“Um...”

Kraugel was also surprised. He frowned as he was contaminated by the demonic energy.

[You have entered hell.]

[You are affected by a strong evil energy.]

[Your body is exhausted. Attack power, defense, and agility will decrease by 30%.]

[Health won't recover naturally.]

[You have received a mental blow. Mana regeneration rate will slow by 50%.]

[You have resisted.]

‘The status resistance is meaningless.’

Yura was strong. Kraugel became vigilant and grasped White Fang.

*Jjeejeeeong!*

Yura leapt over the boiling hellfire river reached Kraugel in an instant and used three joint attacks. It was a much faster and stronger attack than before.

'Kuk...! She managed to keep this trump card hidden so far?'

He understood her thoughts. It was uncomfortable for players to reveal their true power in the National Competition, where everyone in the world was watching. It was better to hide as much power as possible. But if she had to release it to the public, shouldn't it be in a better situation? Kraugel felt negatively about Yura's Hell Summoning.

'Revealing it in a situation where defeat is already determined... She isn't that stupid.'

The summoning of hell was too late. Even if Yura was strong in hell, the gap between the two people's health was too big to be reversed. The outcome of the battle couldn't be changed. She should've summoned hell earlier or not summoned it at all.

Kraugel thought this as he avoided two bullets that flew from Yura in the darkness. He moved his sword while enduring the heat of the hellfire flowing near his feet. It was a counterattack aimed precisely for when Yura's immortal duration ended.

But.

*Sakak-!*

Kraugel couldn't cut Yura. He was a bit confused because he hadn't yet been able to adapt to the sudden change in landscape. Yura used Hell Leap and left the battlefield. It was a retreat using her last remaining mana.

'I can't miss her!'

The moment that Kraugel used White Light Steps and was about to pursue Yura.

*Kiyaaaaoh!*

"...?!"

*Kurururung!*

A hell bone dragon emerged in sky that contained thousands of hell eyes and blew a poisonous breath at Kraugel. The hell summoned by Yura was a habitat for the hell bone dragon. It was extremely good luck from Yura's position.

“Kuk!”

The hell bone dragon was a powerful high level named monster that would make a player scream. Kraugel gave a rare scream as he was attacked by it. He suffered a critical injury as he flew back.

At this time.

*Surururuk!*

The hell vanished. The hell summoned by Yura only had a duration of a minute or so. In that short period of time, the situation of saint sword drawing dramatically reversed. Breaking everyone's expectations, Yura was going to reach the safety zone first.

The only area where PvP was impossible. It was the central area where the saint sword was stuck.

〔Y... Yura.....!〕

〔South Korea's Yura will be the first master of the saint sword!!〕

Who would've imagined that someone other than Grid would win a confrontation with the sky above the sky? No, it was the opinion of most people in the world that even Grid couldn't win against Kraugel. Yet Yura pulled it off...

*Puk!*

“...!”

〔.....!!〕

One step. One step was lacking. Just before Yura entered the safety zone, dozens of swords rushed at her. It was the long-ranged skill of a Sword Saint, which caused 10 swords to be released from his inventory to hit the target. It was one of the skills Kraugel wanted to hide until he met Grid.

"Ugh!"

A sword stabbed Yura's ankle. Fortunately, she kept her life because she drank a potion. However, she fell down while entering the safety zone. Then...

*Teook!*

Kraugel jumped over her. He reached the saint sword first.

〔K-Kraugel wins! Kraugel has won the gold medal by drawing the sword first!〕

〔Ahh, Player Yura has ended up with the silver medal. It is really a waste. But she fought well. I admire her.〕

"Waaaaaaaah!"

Huge cheers shook the Tokyo Dome. The premiere of the 3rd National Competition was fierce and gorgeous.

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The Korean team's waiting room.

"Well fought. You fought really well."

On the screen, the sight of Yura tearing up could be seen. It was the first time she had ever looked so frail. She became a legend before Kraugel and actually achieved a higher growth, but she eventually lost. Was it because her efforts were lacking?

No. In fact, Grid knew better than anyone. It was purely-

'The difference in talent...'

Humans were relative. A person who was praised as the best would end up being humble in front of someone better than them. Grid had been through this painful reality many times. That's why he could figure out what Yura was feeling right now. He was able to feel her desperation.

'I'll get revenge for you.'

Talent?

'I will overcome it with items.'

Grid's blood boiled. After witnessing the victim of Kraugel's talent, he wanted to win even more.

After that. Four more events took place and South Korea didn't win a single medal. On the first day of the National Competition, South Korea's medal status was only one silver medal. But this one silver medal was very valuable. South Korea, which originally should've been at the bottom of the rankings, ended up being near the top of the overall rankings.

At this time, no one knew what this small difference would lead to.

# Chapter 755

United States: Gold (4), Silver (3), Bronze (0)

Canada: Gold (2), Silver (4), Bronze (1)

China: Gold (2), Silver (0), Bronze (0)

United Kingdom: Gold (1), Silver (0), Bronze (4)

Japan: Gold (0), Silver (1), Bronze (2)

South Korea: Gold (0), Silver (1), Bronze (0)

France: Gold (0), Silver (0), Bronze (2)

This was the result of the first day of the 3rd National Competition. As with previous years, the North American, European and East Asian countries were remarkable. Of course, this table was only temporary. There were still 18 events remaining today and tomorrow. New countries would emerge on the leaderboard. Last year's number one, Russia was included.

〔Just like yesterday, there will be nine events held today. Six of those are team events. Today is the most important day out of the National Competition's three days.〕

In order to win the team events, the team must have a wide variety of players. Countries with many outstanding athletes were more likely to win a team medal. The US, Canada, China, and Russia met these conditions. Other countries were significantly less likely to win medals at team events.

〔The countries that wins many medals in the team events out of the four major powers will be ranked first in the overall rankings.〕

〔Will Russian achieve first place for a second consecutive year? Will the United States regain its reputation after winning first at the 1st National Competition? Will Canada, which has always been a first place candidate, finally be different this year? Will China

gain the honor of being the first Asian country to be ranked first?】

【The possibility of Russia getting first is very low. Alexander is outstanding and there are other great talents, but the team is much weaker than when they had Kraugel last year.】

【I agree. Russia's goal is to reach the top 10 and get the country buff. If Russia's strongest ranker Knight, who has been raising his reputation recently, participated, then there was a chance they could get first.】

【What about France, the third ranked country in the 1st National Competition?】

【Bondre, who lost his status since the collapse of the Seven Guilds, isn't participating in the National Competition this year. France also has no hope.】

In the end, it would be the trilogy of the US, Canada, and China. It was as everyone expected, causing the commentators to smile bitterly.

【It's sad that South Korea, which took second place in the 1st and 2nd National Competitions, isn't being talked about at all.】

【The reason why South Korea was able to be placed high in the past National Competitions was because the number of events was small. On the other hand, this year's National Competition has 27 events. Grid might win two gold medals alone, but it's impossible for South Korea to be ranked as highly as before. Look. Today South Korea is only participating in two out of six group events. The players on the participating list are all obscure.】

【Based on the atmosphere, South Korea seems to have half given up already.】

【The attitude is like just participating in the National Competition is fine.】

South Korea was a country shallow in players. There weren't many notable players except for Grid and Yura.

【Yura might win one more medal and Grid might win medals in the PvP and blacksmithing event tomorrow, but that's it.】

【Frankly, I wonder if Grid can win a gold medal. The new rules for the blacksmithing event are disadvantageous to Grid. Then in PvP, Kraugel is standing in the way.】

"They're making too much noise."

The Korean team's waiting room. Eat Spicy Jokbal was burning with enthusiasm as he prepared to take place in the subjugation expedition event. As a Korean person, he felt the desire to prove the commentators who undervalued South Korea were wrong.

"The commentator isn't necessarily wrong."

The hanbok-clad woman Viola giggled. She had long eyes and a long chin, looking like a fox when she laughed.

"Is South Korea really weak?"

"That's right. South Korea is weak." Eat Spicy Jokbal nodded as if to agree with Viola's words. "But only when we weren't here."

A ranker's official activities might bring wealth and fame, but there were also large constraints. That's why Eat Spicy Jokbal, Viola, and Ma Bongshik had always been unofficial rankers. But now they decided to reveal themselves to the world. As long as they decided, they didn't intend to do it roughly.

"Our appearance should be gorgeous. Just like a certain someone."

Eat Spicy Jokbal looked at Grid. Grid saw him and said easily, "Come back with gold."

"Okay. We will bring back two."

"..."

Eat Spicy Jokbal's momentum! The other young Korean players didn't know his identity and clicked their tongues. They were questioning why he was so confident. On the other hand, Grid's expectations were high since he knew Eat Spicy Jokbal's identity.

'Blood Carnival's master'

Eat Spicy Jokbal was a big person who created and operated the strongest and worst dark gamers group. Grid also acknowledged the power of his hidden class, Dungeon Maker. Grid and Peak Sword were sure that his appearance would bring a tremendous shock to the world.

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[Eat Spicy Jokbal? The ID is real.]

[Crazy! What is this? ㅋㅋㅋ]

[Wow, this name is more idiotic than childish.]

[I guess he likes jokbal.]

Subjugation expedition was an event that introduced PvP to the existing raid. Three countries participated in a raid at the same time, hunting the boss while keeping each other in check. The country that accumulated the most damage to the boss would be the champion.

The boss was a cockatrice. It was one level below the drake, the boss of the existing raid. If the raid target was too strong, the players would take a cooperative attitude instead of keeping each other in check. Thanks to this, the subjugation expedition event was expected to be much faster and more intense than a raid. This was the S.A. Group's intention.

“Our first opponents are South Korea and Japan. We have good luck.”

The participating countries in Group A were South Korea, Japan, and Russia. It was good luck for the Russian players. South Korea was weak apart from Grid and Yura. In fact, the Korean players participating in this event were completely unknown. Japan was no different. Damian and Katz weren't participating in this event, only second level rankers.

On the other hand, Russia had Alexander. He was the strongest ranker in Russia after Knight, who had recently started to gain popularity. Last year, he acted with Kraugel to make Russia first in the overall rankings.

“Our goal is the gold medal. We have to get through this first game.”

The results of the previous four group events made the development of the National Competition interesting. The United States didn't win any gold medals, Canada won three gold medals and China won one gold medal. It meant the United States failed to be first. If Russia succeeded in winning gold in the remaining two team events, maybe

Russia could be in the top position in the overall rankings. The Russian players were motivated.

"Hey."

Three minutes before the boss emerged. Alexander glanced at his successor, Ikonikoski, now one of the leading rankers in Russia. Ikonikoski rushed to his side and answered vigorously.

Alexander ordered, "There is a high possibility that South Korea and Japan will feel a sense of crisis and ally with each other. We must aim for the Korean players at the start of the match. Don't give them a chance to cooperate with Japan."

Ikonikoski's abilities were equivalent to the former Alexander. It would be simple for him to get rid of three small fries alone. Ikonikoski replied confidently.

"Yep! I'll get those yellow monkeys... ugh!"

Ikonikoski suddenly screamed. It was because Alexander hit the back of his head. Alexander warned him with a grim facial expression.

"Don't be racist."

"Huh...?"

Alexander was a notorious skinhead. Ikonikoski was stunned once he talked about racial discrimination. Alexander explained to him, "Kraugel is also Korean! You stupid bastard!"

"I-I'm really sorry!"

Many people didn't know that Alexander was following Kraugel. Ikonikoski hadn't known. He wasn't able to understand the situation properly but had to respond like this. He was afraid of Alexander. Right as the Russian team were in turmoil.

"The first match opponents are too weak." Eat Spicy Jokbal on the South Korean team was unhappy. "Shouldn't my debut appearance be at least the level of Kraugel?"

It was the exhibition he had thought hard about. Eat Spicy Jokbal wanted a gorgeous debut to the world. He wanted to imprint his presence on people. However, the

Russian team were the first opponents. Ma Bongshik comforted him.

"Alexander is quite famous. It's lucky that we're matched against him."

"Hmm... it isn't the worst."

Unfortunately, he couldn't do anything. Eat Spicy Jokbal thought positively as he looked over the battlefield. Sand and dust blew through the steep canyon on the center of a wasteland and a cockatrice was on top.

'The key is the climb the canyon first.'

The team that reached the cockatrice first could accumulate more damage. In the end, it would be a game of speed. It was a space where flying magic was blocked. Who could climb the high and steep canyon quickly?

'In addition, the other players have to be kept in check. Well, it has nothing to do with me.'

Eat Spicy Jokbal paid attention to the cave at the entrance of the canyon.

"It's a good structure to summon a dungeon."

A Dungeon Maker became stronger when dungeons were created. It wasn't just because of the rise in stats. He could also summon a dungeon that he created into a specific area. Eat Spicy Jokbal made a variety of dungeons and was able to cope flexibly in any situation as long as the terrain was suitable.

"Let's go over there."

"Yes."

Viola and Ma Bongshik started to move according to Eat Spicy Jokbal's basis. While the Russian and Japanese rankers moved towards the top of the canyon, they headed towards the cave at the entrance of the dungeon.

【...???

】What is this....?】

Immediately after the subjugation expedition match between South Korea, Japan, and Russia started. The commentators who were sure that Russia would win were surprised. It was absurd that the Korean team members were hiding inside the cave instead of defeating the monsters.

〔It's hard to see the actions as meaningful. They must be very nervous.〕

The commentators thought that the Korean players had panicked. They thought there was no possibility of winning and decided to 'hide' in the cave. They were stupid cowards. The Russian rankers thought the same.

"They're worth half a penny."

*Shake shake.*

Alexander laughed. He was stunned that the Korean players hid out of fear.

"Ikonikoski, just ignore them. Move faster than the Japanese players."

"Yes!"

The Russian players moved in an orderly fashion. In the process of climbing the canyon, they narrowed the distance with the Japanese players. The cockatrice was pecking the sand on top of the canyon. It seemed that both the cockatrice and the Japanese players would be killed by the Russians. But it went differently from everyone's expectations.

*Kyao?*

The cockatrice pecking at the sand suddenly looked down at the canyon. The sharp eyes were looking at the cave entrance where the Korean players were hiding.

*Kyaooooh!*

The cockatrice let out a loud sound. Its long legs stretched out. It ignored the Russian and Japanese players climbing the canyon and jumped down.

"What?"

The Russian and Japanese players were upset. When did it suddenly jump down when

they had gone through so much effort? It was also where the Korean team was hiding!

"C-Chase it!"

Even if the Korean players were small fries, their levels were over 250 if they were participating in the National Competition. The three of them would be enough to catch the cockatrice. The Russian and Japanese rankers were nervous. But the canyon walls were too steep. They couldn't catch up with the speed of the cockatrice. The cockatrice arrived in the cave where the South Korean players were hiding.

"Hey! This damn chicken head! Stand there!"

Why was it doing this? Why did it show such great interest in the cave? Alexander questioned it as he yelled at the cockatrice.

*Tak!*

The moment the cockatrice entered the cave.

"Chicken isn't bad."

*Sakak-!*

Eat Spicy Jokbal's sword cut at the cockatrice. It was the moment when dozens of cameras moved from the Russian participants to focus on Eat Spicy Jokbal.

# Chapter 756

Most dungeons contained monsters. The monsters were precious prey that gave experience and riches, making it natural for players to recognize a dungeon as a hunting ground. Nobody was interested in the origin of the monsters in the dungeon.

“Chicken isn’t bad.”

*Kiyaaaaaack!*

Eat Spicy Jokbal’s sword cut at the cockatrice. The cockatrice let out a sharp scream as it struggled. Its eyes were bloodshot as it kept heading deep into the dark dungeon. There was no interest in Eat Spicy Jokbal, who had just seriously decreased its health gauge with one blow. Thanks to this, Eat Spicy Jokbal was safe from ‘petrification.’ He was safe from one of the top status effects.

“The Snake Dungeon was the right answer.”

People might ignore it, but most dungeons were built with a purpose. They all had different features and purposes. That’s why different types of monsters lived in different dungeons.

[Snake Dungeon]

Rating: Epic

A dungeon built by Dungeon Maker Eat Spicy Jokbal.

Due to the argandi trees planted in large quantities inside, rodents such as the ratmen proliferate in large quantities. It is a paradise for snake monsters who eat them.

...

...

Eat Spicy Jokbal had built this Snake Dungeon in order to communicate with the Burangtang Clan, who worshipped snakes. He built the Snake Dungeon near the Burangtang's village and became friends with them, allowing him to clear the 'Burangtang's Treasure' hidden quest. In other words, the Snake Dungeon was originally meant to be near the Burangtang's village.

But Eat Spicy Jokbal had the Dungeon Summoning skill. Dungeon Summoning was a skill that could only be triggered when the cave, building interior, mountain etc. was placed in a 'occupied' state and had the ability to 'summon your dungeon for a limited time.'

The reason Eat Spicy Jokbal summoned the Snake Dungeon was to target the cockatrice. The favourite food of monster which had the head of a rooster and the body of a snake was the 'amphisbaena'.

*Keeeeeeeek-!*

The cockatrice recovered from the wound on its neck with its unique resilience and resumed dashing. It was blinded by its appetite and didn't even look at Eat Spicy Jokbal's party. It only chased after the delicious smell coming from deep in the dungeon.

"Bongsik!!"

"Stop! Severe Cold Spear!"

Ma Bongshik. One of the four founding members of Blood Carnival. He enchanted his spear with spells. In other words, a magic spearman. His spear had the power to induce the 'chill' state.

*Jjang!*

*Jjeejeeeong!*

The cockatrice was stabbed by the spear and its movements started to slow rapidly. This was the power of severe cold. It wasn't as dramatic as other status conditions such as 'frostbite' or 'frozen.' But it showed the power to ignore resistance to abnormal conditions. The chill caused the one affected to slowly lose health and agility.

"Okay! Well done!"

Eat Spicy Jokbal jumped high as the cockatrice was slowed down. His battle power, supplemented by the dungeon buff, was comparable to Grid before Grid for the Enlightenment Sword.

*Sakak-!*

Strong. The cockatrice's health gauge fell by a tenth when hit with Eat Spicy Jokbal's sword.

*Kiik...! Kiiiiik!*

The cockatrice's eyes widened. After receiving a certain amount of damage, it woke up from the prey it was focused on. As soon as its gaze moved to Eat Spicy Jokbal...

"Oh my! Boys! What are you doing?"

Viola wore a witch's hat and spun her magic wand. Like Ma Bongshik, she was a founding member of Blood Carnival and her class was a conjurer. She had the power to strengthen an effect or increase the duration of a status effect. The gaze of the cockatrice once again returned to the dungeon. It immediately started running again while the Eat Spicy Jokbal attacked it.

〔W-What is this...?〕

The commentators were filled with great doubts. Why was there a dungeon in Reilt Canyon, the stage of subjugation expedition? According to the information released by the S.A. Group, a dungeon shouldn't exist here. Then why was the cockatrice obsessed with this dungeon and why weren't the Korean players affected by its petrification?

More than anything else.

'Strong!'

The Korean team members were performing tremendously, despite being unknown. In particular, Eat Spicy Jokbal was outstanding. The cockatrice was only a level 260 field boss, but its base defense was high. There were few who could cause it to lose one-tenth of its health with one blow out of the 1,500 rankers participating in the National Competition. However, Eat Spicy Jokbal was doing this continuously. The cockatrice's health fell every time his sword struck it.

"Waaaaahhhh!"

"I don't know who he is, but he's great! I'm cheering for him!"

While the commentators couldn't understand the situation and had fallen silent, the crowd and viewers were cheering. The development beyond expectations excited the audience.

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"A dungeon?"

Finally, the Russian players descended the canyon. They were confused when they entered the cave where the Korean players had hid.

[You have entered Snake Dungeon.]

[You haven't received permission from the creator. The dungeon considers you an intruder.]

"Now I understand why the cockatrice headed here." Alexander confidently said after thinking about it. "This dungeon is the real stage of the subjugation expedition. The canyon was just a bait."

Ikonikoski admired Alexander's interpretation.

"I see! We wasted our energy and time trying to climb the canyon to get the cockatrice!"

"That's it. It's my fault for not seeing it from the beginning."

"On the other hand, isn't it great that the Korean players came here from the start?"

"..."

Was the story like this? Alexander panicked for a moment before soon denying it.

"No. They just got lucky."

Eat Spicy Jokbal, Viola, and Ma Bongshik. The Korean team members participating in this event were really nothing. They were unknown players he had never heard of before. Alexander was certain that the three of them were certainly the lowest of the 1,500 players competing in this National Competition. The lack of skilled Korean players gave credence to this thought.

"The cockatrice came to the place where they are fearfully hiding... Those guys are really lucky."

They were really ugly players who got to eat for free.

"Let's go after the cockatrice. No matter how weak, the Korean players can hunt the cockatrice. We can't give them the chance."

It had been three minutes since the cockatrice entered the dungeon. It was the time when the cockatrice had just unleashed its opening petrification offensive. It was the right timing for the Korean team to counterattack.

'They will slowly chip away at its health... It should be around 1/30th so the momentum isn't that high. All variables should be blocked.'

It wasn't good to relax. Alexander lit a torch and started running with his colleagues. They advanced into the depths of the surprisingly large dungeon. Snake-type monsters popped up several times along the way. But they were only level 100 and weren't a threat.

'Strange.'

Alexander and the Russian players got goosebumps. It wasn't convincing that monsters who were only level 100 would appear in the National Competition. There was also the warning window about not getting the permission of the creator when they first entered the dungeon.

'It's like a separate space... '

There were many reasons to be wary, but they lacked grounds to doubt the situation. The Russian players were forced to move forward and eventually reached the end of the dungeon. Then they saw it.

*Kyaak!*

The cockatrice's head was separated from its body!

"What?"

Only seven minutes. It had been seven minutes since the cockatrice entered the dungeon. Yet the cockatrice ended up being raided. It was by the unknown Korean players!

"W-Who the hell are you?"

How could they do this? Alexander asked in a trembling voice and Eat Spicy Jokbal replied while dealing the final blow to the cockatrice.

"The two gold reserves."

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"Run!"

The wave that occurred when South Korea defeated Russia and overturned everyone's expectations was huge. After the Group A game, the other players participating in the subjugation expedition ran to the cave at the entrance of the canyon at the start of the game. It was because everyone knew that the cockatrice would come to this place.

But,

"...?"

"...????"

The cockatrice didn't move from the top of the canyon. It stayed in place and waited for the invaders. It was the same in the other games. Apart from South Korea's Group A match, the cockatrice never descended from the canyon.

'What is this?'

The commentators, spectators, participants, and viewers thought they were possessed by ghosts. No one could understand why the cockatrice showed a different behavior pattern only in Group A. In the meantime, the games continued and now

there were only 12 countries remaining

The quarterfinals began. The first teams in the quarterfinals were South Korea, the United States, and Canada. Nobody felt sorry for South Korea, who was assigned to be in the same group as the strongest winning candidates. It was because the players were aware of the Korean players' strength after they defeated the cockatrice in an instant.

'It's tricky.'

The US representative, Cloud clicked his tongue. The United States hadn't won a single gold medal in the four group events that were held. They were in a position to win a gold medal in the subjugation expedition, but they had to face Canada, who had won three gold medals in the previous team events, and South Korea, who showed an unexpected power.

'If we fall here, there won't be a bronze medal.'

The United States representatives had to figure out how to increase the odds and the conclusion was surprisingly quick.

"We have to stop the Korean team from entering the cave."

It was a fact that the cockatrice showed a strange behavior pattern when the Korean players entered the cave. They didn't know what the principle behind it was but there was a possibility that unexpected variables would occur when the Korean players entered the cave.

As a result, Cloud and the other US players ran in the direction of the Korean players at the start of the game. The Canadian players made the same judgment as the American players. They were worried that the cockatrice would jump down while they climbed up the canyon.

【Ah! South Korea is in a great crisis at the very beginning!!】

South Korea became a common target because of their unimaginable power. The commentators were making a fuss while the Korean players were calm. No, they rejoiced at being noticed.

"Cloud and Henry... It wouldn't be an excellent debut if I didn't face people of at least

this standard!"

"Yes. It's better than one Alexander."

"Then let's hunt humans instead of a chicken this time."

The six US and Canadian players participating in the subjugation expedition were the highest ranked players in the top 500 unified rankings. It was evidence that both the US and Canada recognized this event as important. Since both countries wanted to secure the number one position in the overall rankings, it was natural to boldly invest in this event. However, South Korea had invested more than the two countries.

Eat Spicy Jokbal. The concept of ranking was meaningless to a sun grade powerhouse. South Korea had the strongest players who could match Grid. The rankers in the top 500 were just hatched chicks in front of Eat Spicy Jokbal.

*Puk!*

*Sukakak!*

Without needing to reveal any special powers, the Eat Spicy Jokbal trio slaughtered the American and Canadian representatives with pure combat power. Both the United States and Canada missed out on a bronze medal while South Korea won the gold medal.

Throughout the day, Eat Spicy Jokbal rose to the top of all portal sites' search queries. The sale of spicy jokbal in the country rose sharply. Ironically, the jokbal store that Eat Spicy Jokbal operated in Haenam was on holiday.

# Chapter 757

"There were such high rankers in South Korea?"

"Cloud couldn't do anything..."

The United States wasn't able to win a single gold medal in the team events held today. The result of the 'subjugation expedition' was very important since their overall ranking was reversed with Canada. It was a situation where Cloud, the right arm of Zibal, participated in the subjugation expedition. The US wanted Cloud to win a gold medal and didn't doubt that he would live up to their expectations. Yet he was disastrously defeated by the unknown players of South Korea. The US representatives were in a big shock from the unexpected situation.

In this atmosphere, Skull was feeling impressed.

"It's a perfect combination."

Skull. He was the US's top ranking player who maintained the top 10 in the unified rankings for the last four years. He used his excellent eyesight and saw that the Eat Spicy Jokbal trio was really perfect.

Ma Bongshik used his spear to cause the 'chill' status condition, Viola used her magic to maximize the power of the cold, and Eat Spicy Jokbal finished off the weakened enemies with his powerful attacks. The three Korean representatives had excellent individual ability and also compatibility with each other. Looking at their activities, they had been colleagues for at least a few years.

'Grid and Kraugel won't be able to easily go against them.'

Skull thought this and saw Kraugel's eyes. He witnessed Kraugel's black eyes shining with interest.

'This is it.'

He thought that the DNA of Koreans were still alive when he saw the Korean players captivating the minds of the people. It was the gaming DNA of South Korea, which used

to be a powerful in e-sports.



"This is..."

The Canada team's waiting room. Unlike the other players, Chris already knew about Eat Spicy Jokbal and was thrilled. He knew that Eat Spicy Jokbal was acknowledged by Grid but he hadn't expected Eat Spicy Jokbal to be at a level to kill Henry at once.

'Just looking at the strength stat, he has more than me.'

Chris paid attention to Eat Spicy Jokbal's attack power.

'Dungeon Maker... it isn't a combat specialized class. There were very few combat skills. However, the ability to exert a high attack power is purely due to the high strength stat.'

It was evidence that Eat Spicy Jokbal's strength stat was very high. The Dungeon Maker could be classified as an architect. Unlike the production classes of blacksmiths, construction workers, and tailors where 'stats were increased every time an item was made,' the architects increased their strength and stamina by two every time they built a building.

'I know why Grid and Peak Sword covet him so much.'

Eat Spicy Jokbal was basically a good fighter. Once he combined his strength with his colleagues, he would be a full-fledged presence in PvP. Indeed, he was the head of the former PvP group Blood Carnival.

'Becoming stronger in a dungeon...? I also want to fight him someday'

Eat Spicy Jokbal. He captured the attention of the popular rankers as well as the general public, making it a splendid debut.



〔South Korea's victory! South Korea has won the gold medal in building walls after the subjugation expedition!〕

〔South Korea has won two gold medals in the team events! I never imagined that this development was possible... 〕

〔This is a huge variable. The United States hasn't won a single gold medal in the team events today, while Canada missed the opportunity to widen the gap with the US. China, who is chasing these two countries, is also shaken.〕

South Korea had shaken up all three candidates to be first. The country that would be first in the overall rankings was becoming more and more of a mystery.

Canada: Gold (5), Silver (5), Bronze (1)

United States: Gold (4), Silver (5), Bronze (2)

China: Gold (3), Silver (1), Bronze (1)

South Korea: Gold (2), Silver (1), Bronze (0)

United Kingdom: Gold (1), Silver (2), Bronze (4)

Japan: Gold (0), Silver (1), Bronze (3)

France: Gold (0), Silver (0), Bronze (3)

Brazil: Gold (0), Silver (0), Bronze (1)

South Korea obtained two gold medals and their ranking rose. Considering the fact that there were still Yura, Peak Sword, and Grid remaining for South Korea, it was likely South Korea would finish in a high position in the 3rd National Competition.

It was an entirely different result from before the competition started. South Korea's strength went beyond expectations and turned the whole world upside down. South Korea had a completely festive atmosphere.

"Every season of the National Competition is very enjoyable."

"I agree. Grid was active last year and the year before, while there are new faces this year..."

"Ah, I'm really happy! This year we will get the National Competition buff!"

"I'm really excited about Eat Spicy Jokbal. I'm going to eat spicy jokbal instead of chicken during the National Competition."

"I like Ma Bongshik. I didn't know there was a person who raised the 'chill' skill to such an extreme."

"Yes. It's usually evaluated as a junk skill. He must have special insight."

"If Viola wasn't there, they wouldn't have been able to do this."

"It's the first time I've seen a conjurer. It has a high difficulty."

There were those who were happy and those who were sad! While South Korea was excited, China had a funeral-like atmosphere. The wide country that contained 1.5 billion people didn't know what to do.

"Will we once again be ranked lower than South Korea in this year's National Competition?"

"No way! How can a small nation with a population of 50 million beat us every time? I can't accept it!"

Did South Koreans have particularly good genes? Some people had these types of doubts while others were angry at being questioned. The fact that their great nation was caught by a small country shattered the pride of the Chinese people. One of the 50 Chinese players, Zhang Zheng, was the same. He was extremely proud that he was born in the great country of China and grew well enough to enter the world stage.

"Silver medal... not even a silver medal?"

China had been in the last four countries in the subjugation expedition and had advanced to the finals. He thought they could win a gold medal against South Korea, who defeated America and China. But reality was cruel. The Chinese players were trampled by the Korean players and were the first to be eliminated. As a result, China didn't win a single medal in the subjugation expedition. This was despite the fact that they were within the top five rankers of China. The loss was very large.

The agitated Zhang Zheng seized the throats of the players who participated in the

subjugation expedition.

"Do you think you can live if you bring such humiliation to our great country? Huh?"

"Kek! Kekek!"

Among the Chinese rankers, Zhang Zheng was known as a crazy person. Zhang Zheng had his father, a high ranking official, behind him. He was really outspoken and easily hurt people. There was a rumor that he stabbed people with a small knife he always carried.

He took out the knife and threatened his colleagues.

"Remove your hand. They also fought very hard. Don't blame them as if they were sinners."

"Hao...!"

Zhang Zheng's bloodshot eyes stuck to Hao. He wanted to stab and kill Hao right now. But Hao didn't even blink. Zhang Zheng's influence and the knife he wielded didn't pose any threat to Hao.

"Che!" Hao looked at him slowly and Zhang Zheng eventually lowered the knife. He removed the hands gripping his fellow players' necks and muttered towards Hao. "Isn't this funny? Are you the person who kneeled to the Korean dogs twice? Why don't you go and live in South Korea?"

"...Speak any more and you will be hurt."

"Ah? No, aren't you scary? What did I say? Aye, I was just talking to myself."

"Trash."

Hao turned away like he didn't want to argue with Zhang Zheng anymore. Hao returned to his own seat while Zhang Zheng cried out.

"But do you know? People are hating you. Kneeling to someone else when standing on the world stage? You should be careful. If you don't get any good results this year, you might die without knowing it."

“ ”

It wasn't a threat, but the truth. Hao surrendered to Grid in last year's National Competition and in Battlefield this year. He wasn't in a good position. If he went home without any results like Zhang Zhang said, he might receive a knife in the back. China was huge and there were many crazy people.

Hao closed his mouth and Zhang Zheng giggled.

"On the other hand, won't I be cheered on by the people? Yes, I will break the Grid who you kneel before every year."

Zhang Zheng had established a large-scale workshop in China using his wealth and power. He hired more than 100 high level players and repeatedly had them do raids, acquiring their raid items. Currently, Zhang Zheng had reached the highest level, in items as well as level. Hao gave up when Jang Zheng announced his intention to participate in PvP this year.

'Grid, be careful. You will receive all types of insults if you lose to him.'

In this situation, he was worried about Grid rather than his country. Hao realized his attitude and smiled bitterly. He deserved to be stigmatized as a traitor by his people.

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"How is it?"

There were glittering gold medals around the necks of the Eat Spicy Jokbal trio as they returned from two events. They were the first gold medals that South Korea had won this year. The eyes of the young players shone brighter than gold as they saw the gold medals.

"Brothers, Sister! Really cool!"

"I admire you!"

"To be honest, when I saw your ID... No. I really admire you!"

"Huhuhut!"

Eat Spicy Jokbal puffed up at the enthusiastic response of their fellow players. Grid came up to them for a handshake.

"You have suffered. Congratulations and thank you."

"Um... hum hum! Why are you thanking me? Don't misunderstand that I brought the gold medal for you!"

Eat Spicy Jokbal was about to grab Grid's hand when he suddenly gave Grid the cold shoulder. It had already passed but Grid was the one who disbanded Blood Carnival and took away the insane dragon's egg. Eat Spicy Jokbal's abilities were lacking and he couldn't complain. However, he had no intention of being friendly with Grid.

*Bah!* Viola snorted and approached Grid on his behalf.

"Jokbal is originally a bit narrow-minded. Overgeared King, please generously understand."

"..."

Viola continued to be pleasant to Grid throughout the National Competition. Grid saw that Eat Spicy Jokbal was surrounded by other players and asked her carefully.

"You don't blame me?"

"Of course I blame you. Our big business collapsed because of you."

"..."

"But I don't want revenge just because I blame you. Looking at the way you treat Jokbal, you look like someone who can give us bigger profit than before."

She saw it properly. Grid wanted Eat Spicy Jokbal to join the Overgeared Kingdom. It was clear that the power of the Overgeared Guild would rise sharply if they joined.

"You can see people properly. I want you. We can be a great help to each other."

"I think so as well. But."

The problem was Eat Spicy Jokbal. It would be hard for them to be colleagues unless

Eat Spicy Jokbal opened his heart. Grid was thinking this when Viola mentioned a completely different person.

"The princess will hate you even when she wakes up. Therefore, we probably won't be able to join you for a while."

"Princess?"

"The youngest of the founding members of Blood Carnival. She's a pretty university student? Huhut, please be careful, because that child is a fierce leopard."

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The second day's schedule was over. China, England, and Mongolia won the gold medals in the three solo events after the team events.

There was the 'truth game' where the players had to capture the hearts of 10 NPCs based on the clues they obtained during the game. Once Grid saw that Huroi took part in the event, he thought, 'Ah, this is going to be bad.' But unexpectedly, it was a big success. Huroi didn't mention the opponent's parents, despite facing stressful challenges. He showed his dignity by calmly charming the NPCs. Looking at it, Grid was reminded that Huroi's class wasn't a curse debuffer, but an orator.

Now there were nine events remaining. Tomorrow, the 3rd National Competition would be over.

Then.

"It's starting now."

Grid, Yura, Peak Sword, and Toon. South Korea's flagship members were ready to play.

# Chapter 758

"Hahahahat! The Japanese surprisingly know the taste of food! Ah~ they have great taste!"

The second day of events for the National Competition finished. Peak Sword was satisfied after dinner at a famous restaurant. He embraced people passing by and even danced. Why was he feeling so good?

"Heh, I guess he's happy that I won a gold medal."

Eat Spicy Jokbal thought this way but reality was different.

"The restaurant has kimchi as a side dish! It's really wonderful that the Japanese know the taste of kimchi! Nice! Puhahahat!"

"..."

The president of the Korean Patriotic Society, Peak Sword! He was very happy that most of the restaurants he visited during his stay in Japan sold kimchi. He felt great pride that the great food culture of Korea had completely captivated the hearts of the Japanese people.

"I especially like the fact that kimchi is being sold! Right! It's right! Good food like kimchi should receive money to eat it! Don't just give it for free! In Korean restaurants, the kimchi side dishes should be paid for separately! Right! That's right!"

"...No, most side dishes in Japan you need to pay for..."

"Kuhahahaha! Hooray kimchi!"

"...Crazy guys."

They were tired of dealing with the extreme Peak Sword, who fell into a world of his own without listening to others. Eat Spicy Jokbal and the other representatives left Peak Sword alone. Thanks to that, Grid frowned as he was left alone with Peak Sword.

"No, this country doesn't have jjampong?"

That's right. Grid was also in a world of his own.

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〔It's finally the day.〕

〔Yes, it's the last day of the 3rd National Competition. Most people are looking forward to this day because it's a big day of popular events.〕

〔There are more people who feel regret. There are claims that it's necessary to increase the duration of the National Competition to two weeks like the Olympics.〕

Before the start of the third day of the National Competition, the commentators of various broadcasting companies spoke freely. The commentators were as excited as the audience and the viewers. They were all filled with expectations.

They didn't know which country would make it to the top 10 of the overall rankings and receive the country buff. They didn't know who would win the target processing event. They didn't know if Grid could do well in the blacksmithing, if Kraugel could prove himself to be the strongest, etc.

All nine events held today were enough to stir up a hot topic. The result was that the expectations of billions of people around the world were boosted. What would unfold? In the midst of this...

〔The first event of the third day of the 3rd National Competition will now begin! It's starting!〕

"Waaahhhhhh!"

The first event on the third day started. The first event was the blacksmithing game! It was an event that Grid, who played a leading role every year of the National Competition, was participating in.

"I will cheer you from afar!"

"You will surely win! Prove that there is no use in the S.A. Group's actions!"

"Fighting Grid!"

The Korean team's waiting room. The young players of South Korea didn't hesitate to cheer for Grid. Grid felt strange as he saw them looking at him with envious eyes.

"Those who dream of being me... '

He had always been ignored and now he was the target of envy for someone. It was like a dream for Grid. It felt like he was experiencing a hidden camera prank. But this was reality.

*Duguen! Duguen!*

Grid's heart thumped. Grid didn't want this reality to shatter like a dream overnight. He desired to prove himself further. Interestingly, the form of his aspirations was somewhat different from before. Grid previously wanted to prove his worth for himself, but now it was different. For those who envied him, Grid wanted to prove his worth to return their faith.

"Believe in me."

He had overcome the jinx a long time ago. Grid spoke a trustworthy line and smiled at the young players. The smile of an idol was eternally engraved in the minds of the young players.

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"Do you remember what I said before?"

Panmir greeted Grid after they connected to the stage of the blacksmithing game. His appearance in the game was somewhat younger than reality. It was because the character created four years ago didn't age. There was a longing to catch the years that flowed on endlessly.

"Don't be too frustrated if you miss out on the gold medal today. You aren't any worse than the others."

The criteria for this year's blacksmithing event was purely the 'item rating.' The item performance didn't apply to the evaluations, making Grid a clear victim since he could

produce better items than other people. Panmir sympathized with Grid. He saw Grid as a lamb sacrificed to the tyranny of the large corporations. Grid knew Panmir had no hostility and took a friendly attitude.

"Well, I will accept your encouragement."

"Haha! You surely are a king. I praise your solid mentality that can be so calm in front of an unreasonable situation."

Panmir, who had dominated the blacksmith rankings for the past several years, knew the sad truth. The fact that top-quality blueprints only guaranteed an 'epic' rating.

'The situation is the same for Grid...'

Like the other participants, Grid didn't have a way to ensure a unique or higher rated item. Those who were less skilled than Grid became equal to him in this competition.

'It's the moment when all the items you have made become meaningless...'

Panmir confirmed the time and moved to his position.

After a while. The host confirmed that all players were in front of the furnace they were assigned to.

"Everyone, do you see? This year's blacksmith event has 50 people! All 50 nations participating in the National Competition this year have a representative taking part in the blacksmith event!"

The result of making an item was pure luck. Depending on the creator's capabilities, the performance might vary. But the rating wasn't affected by the creator. It was determined by probability. In the end, there was no winning candidate for the championship. The luckiest person would win. There were many people who wanted to participate.

'I prayed all night for the sake of today!'

'I gave an offering to the temple!'

'I prayed on a totem. Please give me a unique rated item!'

The blacksmiths became religious! They adjusted the firepower of the blast furnace and dreamt of winning. They brought out their best blueprint to prepare for this fight. It was the highest grade production method that guaranteed at least an epic rating.

'I will definitely beat Grid this year!'

The blacksmiths pulled out materials suitable for the production method and started making items. Dozens of blacksmiths lined up in five rows and wielded their hammers. It was a common sight in the Overgeared Kingdom, which had large smithies.

〔Many people will remember that last year, Player Grid made a growth item and won. At the time, the judging team appreciated the potential of the growth type item and give Player Grid the gold medal.〕

〔It backfired. There was a backlash in many countries. People questioned whether Grid's item, which was just a normal rating at the time, was worth a gold medal despite being a growth item.〕

〔This is the result of the public opinion. The criteria for this year's blacksmithing event is just the item rating. The people who created the highest rated item will win the championship.〕

〔There is a rumor that the blacksmith rankers have achieved the minimum qualifications to make a legendary item. What if several players make a legendary item?〕

〔Those players will proceed with a separate rematch.〕

〔Ah, I see. Hrmm... I am really curious about the result. The title of 'only legendary item maker' supposedly owned by Player Grid, will end soon. I'm really looking forward to seeing which player will make a legendary rated item.〕

**The Only Legendary Item Maker.** Grid had been aware of the fact that the lifetime of his unique title, which raised dexterity by 350, was finite since the time he produced a myth rated item. Grid wasn't able to produce myth rated items originally, but grew to be able to make them. It wasn't difficult to deduce that other blacksmiths would also be able to make items of the legendary rating.

'Maybe this title will change.' It would likely change to 'First Legendary Item Maker' the moment another blacksmith made a legendary rated item. 'I don't know if the

effect of raising dexterity by 350 will be maintained.'

If the title effect was eaten then he would definitely complain to the customer service. Grid pledged and pulled out a production item. It was Design: Failure. It was a production method that Grid originally created and the minimum rating was guaranteed as 'unique.'

'The change in rules this time doesn't affect me.'

Only Grid knew. The others couldn't imagine it, but the new rules of the blacksmithing event couldn't hit Grid. The S.A. Group was conscious of public opinion but didn't infringe on the rights of individuals like Grid. It was natural for the company to operate the game as fairly as possible. It was the S.A. Group's policy to try and exclude any unfair advantage or disadvantage to a particular person.

"Then I'm going."

Grid pulled out the large number of blue orichalcum that he prepared for this event.

"Let's start the production.

Grid grasped the production hammer he had been using for several years. His goal was naturally to make a legendary rated Failure. It was because there was a higher possibility of a rematch if he made a unique rated item.

'At least one out of the 50 people will make a unique rated item.'

But Grid was certain.

'I am the only one who can make a legendary rated item in three hours.'

The odds were much higher than 1%.

*Kkuok!*

He placed strength in the hand holding the hammer. He thought it would be great if he could give the legendary rated Failure to Chris.



*Ttang! Ttang!*

It was two hours after the blacksmithing event began. There was sympathy in the eyes of the crowd watching Grid work hard. He seemed pitiful since the revised rules meant he could no longer see the benefits of a legendary blacksmith.

“It’s futile.”

“If I was Grid, I would go to the headquarters of the S.A. Group and flip it upside down. Honestly, they’re sniping at certain players too obviously.”

“But Grid didn’t say even one word. I once again realize what a great person he is.”

“Isn’t he a king? Grid is the ruler of hundreds of thousand of people. His heart is like a wide ocean.”

“Maybe not. It’s obvious to be angry about this situation. However, the people who follow him might be disgraced if he shows it. Therefore, he’s patient.”

“Isn’t he not even 30 years old yet? His mindset is very deep for his age. I’m over 50 years old, but I respect him.”

The process of making an item wasn’t gorgeous. It was the simple task of heating, cooling, and hammering. But it was strangely addictive. The audience was focused on watching the powerful yet delicate blacksmithing work.

“The given time limit is over!”

Before they knew it, three hours had passed. Some blacksmiths smiled as if satisfied with the result of their item, while some blacksmiths looked disappointed. Some blacksmiths wanted more time.

“Grid?”

The crowds’ eyes were focused on Grid. There was a transparent blue sword that looked like a shark in front of Grid.

“Oh! Look at that!”

It was the greatsword that Grid once used. The audience was excited about Failure while the judges started to check the information of the items that the players had made. Panmir was smiling.

‘Okay. A unique rating has emerged. I was lucky!’

He wasn’t expecting a legendary item. The probability of making a legendary item was only 0.01%. Panmir was satisfied. No one could make a legendary item in this short time. Panmir expected that he would win the event or have a rematch was someone as lucky as himself. The judging panel finally finished their examination. The host received the examination results and immediately shouted.

“Grid wins!”

“Huh?”

“Player Grid has made a legendary rated item, becoming the winner for two consecutive years!”

“Huh??”

Panmir’s eyes widened as he witnessed the scene.

# Chapter 759

‘Grid made a legendary item? In such a short time?’

Panmir analyzed that the probability of Grid making a legendary item was less than 0.01%. The evidence was sufficient. Grid had been Pagma's Descendant for at least three to four years. In other words, Grid was already qualified to produce legendary items from three to four years ago. It was as long as 10 years in Satisfy time. However, it was estimated that Grid had made less than 10 legendary items in these years.

‘The blue greatsword, black greatsword, black scale armor...’

Grid had steadily used the same items over the years. Despite being called the Overgeared King, he was suffering from an item famine. Based on this, Panmir thought that the probability of Grid making a legendary item was very low. He was convinced that Grid had an almost 0% chance of making a legendary item in this event. Panmir thought it wouldn't be much different from himself.

But what was the reality?

[(Seeing the Gods' Techniques) Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill Lv. 8]

Grid's blacksmithing technique had evolved and now displayed a better performance than before. While the past Grid had a ‘very rare’ chance of producing legendary items, the current Grid had a ‘slim’ chance of producing legendary items. That wasn’t all. Grid had the Legendary Blacksmith’s Hammer which he designed and produced himself. It was a hammer that raised the probability of making a legendary item by a huge 1%. Theoretically, one out of 100 items that Grid made would be a legendary item.

Nevertheless, why did Grid have so few legendary items? It was purely because he was unlucky. The bad luck that Grid was born with overshadowed the system’s probability. Yoon Nahee, head of the S.A. Group’s operations team, still vividly remembered. It was the dozens of emails that Grid had sent to the operations team a few years ago.

[Operators, I’m a legendary blacksmith. I clearly made the item according to the production method, so why do I only make normal items? Is it a bug??]

[Operators?? I sent you an email the other day. I spent a few hours making an item, but why is it only normal or rare?? Even the rare item rarely emerges.]

[Hey, this XXX people! I have already made hundreds of items but I haven't seen an epic item! Huh? Is this a fart? Why am I called a legend when I don't make legendary items, you XXX!! Is this a bug or the operators' manipulation? Eh?? Eh?!]

[Ah! XX! This scammer! Do I have to go to headquarters?? Will good words stop the manipulation??]

“...”

These were the contents of Grid's emails. At that time, Team Leader Yoon Nahee and the management team hadn't applied any sanctions to Grid. They turned a blind eye to his senseless behavior. It was because he was too pitiful. At the time, the odds of Grid making an item was too low for the operations team. The operations team even doubted if there was a bug and checked it out. Of course, the conclusion was that it wasn't a bug. It turned out that Grid's luck was just bad. The operations team sympathized with Grid.

'At that time, I couldn't imagine.' A smile spread on Yoon Nahee's face as she confirmed the result of the blacksmithing event. 'I didn't think that person would become so big.'

The misfortunate that Grid accumulated led to a burst of good fortune at important moments. It was possible because Grid fought to the end, rather than feeling frustration or giving up. Team Leader Yoon Nahee saluted Grid.

“Congratulations. I look forward to your continued success in the future.”

◇ ◇ ◇

‘...Luck is also a skill. My defeat is natural.’

The opponent was a legendary blacksmith. The fact that Grid was a legend in the first place suggested that his luck was overwhelmingly good. Panmir tried to convince himself after being defeated for two consecutive years. But it wasn't easy either. He was overwhelmed when he thought that his efforts of the past few years were meaningless.

Look at the tailor's event and the jewelry maker event. The number one tailor and number one jeweler both won gold medals in their events. On the other hand, the number one blacksmith had never won a single gold medal.

'It's no use trying.'

Why did the sky give birth to Panmir and Grid in the same time? Panmir was lamenting and feeling frustrated when the performance of Failure was revealed to the public.

"Wow! Look at this performance. Really crazy."

"This is a production item? Isn't the performance much nicer than dropped items?"

"No, what? It's even an item that Grid designed?"

"The name is Failure..."

"If that's a failure, what's a success...?"

The first item that Grid created, Failure was only a tier two item according to Grid's current standards. Failure was lacking compared to the Red Phoenix Bow and the Enlightenment Sword. However, the public perceived Failure as a master weapon. Failure started popping up in the real time search of portal sites in various countries. The netizens were busy analyzing the performance.

In the midst of the turmoil.

"Panmir."

Grid approached Panmir. Grid was worried. Panmir's eyes were full of grief, resembling Khan remembering the loss of his son. It was as if he would quit the game at once. Grid didn't want this development. An excellent blacksmith was a must for the Overgeared Kingdom!

"Look at this."

[Player Grid wishes to share the item information with you. Would you like to accept?]

“...?”

Panmir was stunned. He couldn't understand why Grid passed the hammer to him.

“Heok...!” Panmir accepted the item information sharing while feeling puzzled. It was like he had seen a ghost as his eyes widened.

[Legendary Blacksmith's Hammer]

Rating: Legendary

Durability: 550/550 Attack Power: 130~150

Odds of Making a Rare Rated Item: +30%

Odds of Making an Epic Rated Item: +20%

Odds of Making a Unique Rated Item: +8%

Odds of Making a Legendary Rated Item: +1%

\* The amount of experience acquired for production related skills will increase.

Conditions of Use: Pagma's Descendant

“U-Unbelievable!!!”

13 years. That was how long Panmir had been working as a blacksmith in Satisfy. Panmir had produced countless items over the years and cleared all types of quests, giving him a 0.01% chance of making legendary items. However, the hammer produced by Grid raised his chances of making a legendary item by 1%. Everything was useless in front of the power of items.

Panmir received a great shock and stumbled. He tried to give strength to his weakened legs.

“I'd be happy to make a hammer for you.”

Grid helped him. Grid held Panmir's thick waist to support him and suggested.

"The condition is that you move to the Overgeared Kingdom. Panmir, I want you. Please join the Overgeared Guild."

"...B-But."

Panmir felt very greedy at Grid's proposal. He became motivated again. However, after learning how to make ego items in the dwarf kingdom, Panmir was now the chief blacksmith of the empire. He beat prominent NPCs and was directly acknowledged by the emperor. He wasn't lacking wealth and power after receiving the protection of the empire that dominated the continent. Was it worth it to give up all of this to move to the Overgeared Kingdom?

Grid made the hesitant Panmir realize reality.

"Is there anything more important than items in the world? The empire can't give you items."

"Ah....!"

The fog in Panmir's mind cleared. Life was items! Panmir realized the truth and his hesitation was gone.

"Understood...! I will put in my application to the Overgeared Guild immediately!"

"It isn't the Overgeared Guild but the Overgeared Workfor... No, put in your application to Overgeared Two. That's the guild for all non-combat classes."

"Yes...? "U-Understood."

If he wasn't wrong, Grid was about to say workforce? Panmir doubted his ears and nodded.

Then.

"What...?"

Numerous audience members and viewers witnessed a middle-aged man and a young man whispering to each other while holding each other. A lot of people misunderstood

what was going on between Grid and Panmir. The flush on Panmir's face just increased the misunderstanding.

'Something is suspicious.'

Grid got a chill but he wasn't overly concerned. In any cause, today the workforce of the Overgeared Kingdom... No, it was the day he secured a huge talent. Grid was very happy. The more the National Competition repeated, the bigger Grid became.

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"Pathetic."

The US team's waiting room. After the match, Skull criticized Panmir. It wasn't because Panmir lost to Grid for two consecutive years. Panmir, who won the silver medal, was to be praised, not blamed. Skull's anger was because Panmir joined Grid.

"I heard from the other blacksmiths. You decided to join the Overgeared Guild?"

"That's right."

"Kuk...! Don't you have any pride? You're actually going to serve Grid? Didn't you say you would always deny Grid, who obtained the class of legendary blacksmith from luck?"

"Don't downplay his feats as mere luck."

"You're crazy! You're out of your mind because you're blinded by items!"

In fact, Skull had admired Panmir. Skull respected Panmir for being at the top of his field, despite his age. That's why he was more disappointed.

"Panmir! I...! I wanted you to resist Grid to the end and overcome him!"

"...I'm sorry."

Panmir knew that Skull admired him. Panmir couldn't help smiling bitterly.

"I'm not like you! I will deny items and rely on my skills!" Skull declared as he ran out of the waiting room.

Two hours later.

“...Can I join the Overgeared Guild?”

After participating in the monster obstacle race, Skull was hit like a dog by Jishuka's Red Phoenix Bow and went to find Grid. Skull realized the true power of items.

# Chapter 760

Break through 13 gates guarded by different boss monsters and reach the destination. This was the goal of the monster obstacle race. If saint sword drawing combined strength and intelligence, this monster obstacle race required both stamina and strength since it required constant raids.

The most important thing was stamina. The player's stamina was consumed quickly in the process of moving through continuous raids and rough terrain. The basics for the participants had to be high stamina and stamina management. It was natural that all 15 participants taking part in the monster obstacle race were the strongest representatives of each country.

It was strange that only Jishuka of the Overgeared Guild was taking part, but people predicted a fierce battle. But the result was different from everyone's expectations.

"Fly Up!"

*Kiiiiing!*

*Peng! Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!*

"What...?"

"This is crazy! Uwaaaack!"

One overwhelming attack! Jishuka climbed on top of the third boss, the pinky dragon. The moment she put all the participants in her sight, it could be said that the game was already over. The overwhelming bombardment of the Red Phoenix Bow dealt a fatal blow to all participants. The pinky dragon's breath also caused some of the injured participants to grey.

"Riding the pinky dragon and not being burned... Isn't this a scam?"

"It's good that we didn't participate."

The Overgeared members in the waiting rooms of each country muttered. They were

reluctant to participate in events with Jishuka since they knew the options of the Red Phoenix Bow. The host was shouting.

〔J-Jishuka wins! Brazil has successfully obtained a valuable gold medal!〕

The other players were noticeably tired as they passed through each gateway, while Jishuka alone was different. Hundreds of cameras focused on Jishuka's bright smile as she broke through the 13th gateway. She looked beautiful no matter the angle, causing the hearts of men all over the world to thump.

"Grid, have strength for the event remaining. *Chu!*"

Jishuka's concern was only for Grid...

"Boo! Booo!"

"Die Grid!!"

The anger of the crowd rang out all over Tokyo Dome and across the world.

"Isn't it nice to be encouraged by a beauty? Is the chocolate pudding sweeter today?"

"...?"

The Korean team's waiting room. Grid didn't know why he received a scolding from Yura.

◇ ◇ ◇

The last day of the National Competition.

Unlike the wishes of the people, time flew quickly and four of the nine events scheduled for today had already ended. The global festival that occurred once a year was almost over.

"I'm sorry."

Toon returned after winning two bronze medals in two events and apologized to Grid. It was difficult from Grid's perspective.

"Why are you apologizing for doing well? You were amazing. Thank you for the two precious medals."

"Yes Toon! You fought really well! The people will be delighted!"

"But..."

Toon's gaze was stuck to the rankings board. There was a big screen in the center of Tokyo Dome that showed the overall rankings.

United States: Gold (5), Silver (7), Bronze (3)

Canada: Gold (5), Silver (5), Bronze (4)

China: Gold (4), Silver (2), Bronze (1)

United Kingdom: Gold (3), Silver (2), Bronze (4)

South Korea: Gold (3), Silver (1), Bronze (2)

Brazil: Gold (1), Silver (0), Bronze (1)

Mongolia: Gold (1), Silver (0), Bronze (0)

Japan: Gold (0), Silver (2), Bronze (3)

Italy: Gold (0), Silver (2), Bronze (3)

France: Gold (0), Silver (1), Bronze (4)

Bronze medals didn't have a significant effect on the rankings. A silver medal was more valuable than dozens of bronze medals. That's why Toon didn't feel proud. Toon was frustrated that South Korea had the same rank before and after gaining the medals.

"I wish that South Korea can be number one. I wanted to please Grid and your family. But..."

Toon was an orphan who didn't know the face of his parents. He'd been in the

underworld from a young age and was active in the mafia until encountering Satisfy. He was a criminal in Italy and not loved by anyone. But Grid and his family were different. Toon came to South Korea and received a warm greeting from Grid's family. They believed and cared for him just because he was friends with their son or brother. They treated Toon like a son, a brother.

Toon felt warm every time he sat with them. It was the first time he'd felt this way. He didn't know how many times he cried himself to sleep out of happiness. A happiness he learned much later than others...

Toon wanted to help those who gave him happiness. It was a desperate wish. But the truth was that it didn't help at all.

"I know how good Yura is. But it'll be hard for her to win a gold medal against Jishuka, who's armed with the Red Phoenix Bow."

"..."

"And Peak Sword... Even if Grid gets a gold medal by beating Kraugel in PvP, South Korea won't get the first ranking. All this is because of my incompetence."

"Why was I omitted?" Peak Sword cried out, but Toon didn't hear his words. His eyes were blurred by helplessness. He bowed his head when Grid's large hand touched him.

"Raise your head. Aren't you my bodyguard? Who will protect me if you're looking at the ground? Don't worry about Yura and Peak Sword. Both of them will give us a gold medal."

"...?"

South Korea getting first in the rankings was realistically impossible. All the Korean players were aware of this reality. Therefore, they turned to look at Grid with a stunned expression. They felt the full confidence in his voice.

Grid smiled. "Wait a minute. I'll log into the game."

Grid pointed to the capsule in the corner of the waiting room and called Yura and Peak Sword over.

"Shouldn't we try taking first place? How long will we be second? Isn't that right?"

“...?”

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“The Overgeared King cares a lot about his colleagues.”

Viola smiled and spoke to Eat Spicy Jokbal after seeing what Grid had done for Yura and Peak Sword.

“Does Eat Spicy Jokbal like it?”

“Stop talking useless words.”

Eat Spicy Jokbal blushed, but didn’t remove his gaze from Grid. He was interested in Grid’s every move.

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Target processing was a popular event every year. It was the event where Grid announced his existence to the world. But this year it was Yura participating, not Grid. The revised rules had changed it to a one player event and the winning candidate was naturally Jishuka. It was speculated that she would summon the red phoenix to simultaneously shoot down the targets and competitors on the map. In theory, there was no way Jishuka couldn’t win.

〔Originally, Yura was one of the strongest candidates...〕

〔It’s no longer possible to talk about a winner other than Jishuka.〕

The experts also thought the same. The Korean commentators were disappointed.

〔There are a number of ways that South Korea can get the overall first ranking.〕

〔It’s possible if Canada and the US don’t win a gold medal in the remaining five events and South Korea wins four gold medals in a row?〕

〔Yes, that’s right. But it’s sad since that’s impossible.〕

〔Jishuka is too strong. Peak Sword is an excellent player, but he’s somewhat lacking to

receive a gold medal. But this isn't something to be sad about. It isn't necessary to be first.]

〔That's right. Our players have done well enough. We should pay tribute to our players.〕

Everyone in the world had expected South Korea's ranking to be the lowest this year. However, the Korean players were excellent and as a result, South Korea was in the top rankings. There was no one who would blame the South Korean players for failing to be first.

“I'm sorry for Grid, but personal matters should be separated.”

The target processing began. At the same time, Jishuka moved through the forest and aimed to occupy the highest spot. She was planning to take advantage of the power of Fly Up! She would put as many targets as possible into her field of view and would win a gold medal at once.

〔Jishuka has climbed to the top of the hill!〕

〔She plans to see all targets in the sky and on the ground.〕

The target processing event, which was intense every year, was on the verge of facing an unprecedented result.

*Kkirik!*

People didn't doubt that Jishuka would soon be the winner as she pulled back the Red Phoenix Bow. Of course, it was the same for Jishuka.

'I must win the gold medal and obtain the Red Phoenix Breath... '

Jishuka had 120 targets in her field of view. The moment she was about to use the Fly Up! skill.

*Taaang!*

A shot rang out from the forest below the hill. It happened when Jishuka noticed the birds simultaneously flying up out of surprise. Her vision turned black and white.

[You have been shot.]

[You have died.]

'What...?'

*Swaaaaah.*

Jishuka couldn't understand the situation as she turned to grey.

*Clink!*

After confirming Jishuka's death, Yura changed Alex's Magic Engineering Bayonet (Produced by Pagma) from sniper mode to rifle mode. It was the moment that the Demon Slayer exclusive item that Grid obtained from the Behen Archipelago was revealed for the first time to the world.

This was the power of items.

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"Our goddess has done it!!"

"Waaahhhhhh!"

"Yura! Yura! Yura!!!"

The winner of the target processing was Yura. South Korea was heating up. Over 50 million people were delighted that Yura exceeded expectations. Everyone cheered at the thought of South Korea's overall ranking rising higher. In addition, they sent personal congratulations to Yura. There were a surprising number of people desperately happy for Yura after she suffered a painful defeat in the saint sword drawing event to Kraugel. It was evidence that Yura had the love of the people.

"Canada and the US might continue losing in the remaining four events. Then maybe we can get first?"

“It will be possible if South Korea wins three more gold medals in the future!”

“The remaining players are Grid and Peak Sword?”

“Yes!”

“...That isn’t possible.”

“Uh... Peak Sword can’t win.”

It was undeniable that Peak Sword was one of the top three strongest in South Korea. He was definitely a world class player. The problem was that there were more talented people in the world. People didn’t expect much from Peak Sword. In the midst of these worries.

“...”

Unlike usual, Peak Sword had a solemn expression as he entered the battlefield. There was a beautiful sheath of a transparent red color hanging from his waist. It was the strongest sheath exclusive to Iyarugt and made of bloodstone, Iyarugt’s Sheath.

# Chapter 761

Seven players from six countries participated in breaking the hero. There was a 'Hero' in the center of the stage.

"Are you challenging me?"

A black-haired man asked with a nonchalant face. He was the 'Hero.'

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[Breaking the Hero]

It was the event Peak Sword was participating in. The participants would fight one on one with the Hero and the contestants who defeated the Hero the quickest would win. It was an ordinary time attack game. However, the public's expectation for the event that was debuting this year was very big.

It was due to the identity of the Hero. It was the PvP winner of the 2nd National Competition, Kraugel. That's right...

To be precise, the Hero was a 'doppelganger' who duplicated Kraugel's stats and skills from last year. How many of this year's contestants could fight against the strongest player last year? Breaking the hero was enough to stimulate the curiosity of the public and attracted a great deal of attention long before the 3rd National Competition began.

〔Chris from Canada, Damian and Katz from Japan, Pon from Spain, Regas from the United Kingdom... The participants are amazing. But the number of participants is much lower than expected. Why?〕

〔This the majesty of Kraugel. It might be the Kraugel from one year ago, but Kraugel of last year is still recognized as the 'best.' How many would dare challenge him? I think it's great that there are seven participants.〕

Some experts interpreted this way, but reality was different. The reason why other players didn't participate in breaking the hero wasn't because they feared Kraugel's

doppelganger.

"What's the point of knocking down a ghost of the past?"

The Argentina team's waiting room. Soul Predator Seuron scoffed as he confirmed the participants of breaking the hero.

"Pathetic losers. If you want to be a real hero, you should play in PvP."

It wasn't just Seuron. The elites of the other countries also laughed at the participants of breaking the hero. What was the point of winning a fight with the Kraugel from one year ago? It was clear that this year's Kraugel would be much stronger than last year after becoming a Sword Saint. They had to fight and win against this year's Kraugel in order to be qualified to win the title of the strongest.

'Breaking the hero is nothing but a refuge for the cowards who don't dare to challenge the true Kraugel.'

The people who thought like this didn't realize that all the participants in breaking the hero were members of Overgeared or deeply related to the Overgeared Guild.

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"In the end, we gathered like this."

1st on the unified rankings, Chris. He broke the expectations of many people and participated in breaking the hero instead of PvP. Then he greeted the other participants.

Pon, Regas, Peak Sword, Katz, Ibellein, and Damian. All the participants except for Damian belonged to the Overgeared Guild and Damian was a famous Grid fan. The people who challenged the non-PvP event, breaking the hero, had one thing in common. They were those who knew the power of Grid's new sword, the Enlightenment Sword.

In particular, Damian had the direct experience of dying from the Enlightenment Sword. That's right. The reason they didn't participate in PvP wasn't because they were afraid of Kraugel like the other strong players thought. Grid was scary.

"But..." Katz ignored the other participants and talked to Peak Sword and Ibellenin. "Isn't it too difficult for guys like you to challenge Kraugel?"

It was a realistic question, not a hurtful one. Peak Sword and Ibellenin were vulnerable to Kraugel. It was suicide for Peak Sword to compete one on one against the nimble Kraugel, since Peak Sword had a big delay after attacking. Ibellenin was very talented, but he was still inexperienced. He couldn't handle Kraugel's skills.

Ibellenin replied ambitiously, "I don't believe I can win! But I think this is a good chance to measure my skills! I'm determined to use today's challenge as a platform for my growth!"

On the other hand, Peak Sword...

"Hut. The Japanese have such futile hobbies? You don't need to worry about me."

The replies were very enthusiastic.

Chris laughed. "It's nice that you have faith. But it won't be easy. Don't you know? It will be very difficult to win a gold medal against me."

Chris carried the fate of his country. Once he won a gold medal in this event, the chances of Canada being ranked first would be increased exponentially. Chris had an obligation and a desire to win. Chris' eyes showed his desire not to yield and it was enough to stimulate the other participants.

The participants became more competitive because they were close friends. Apart from Peak Sword and Ibellenin, there was a fierce war of nerves between those who were regarded as the power of their countries. It was like there were flames in their eyes as they looked at each other. However, their eyes were amiable when they looked at Peak Sword and Ibellenin. The pity was obvious! In this event, they were clearly looking down on Peak Sword and Ibellenin!

Peak Sword felt isolated, but he muttered with a calm expression. "...I will show you the spirit of South Korea today."

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〔Chris and Damian have an 80% chance of winning in breaking the hero.〕

〔That's right. They're the strongest people who have been often compared to Kraugel since last year. After all, Chris is first in the unified rankings while Damian has been the pope for a few years. I think it isn't hard for them to beat the Kraugel of last year. Time is of the essence.〕

〔Chris has explosive power with his greatsword, so he's likely to kill the Hero faster than Damian. Apart from these two, Katz seems to have high odds. Katz has a high chance of winning if he can block the Hero's agility with his unique ability to control blood.〕

〔On the other hand, it's questionable if Pon and Regas can win. Their strength is in their control, the same as Kraugel. It will be difficult for them to win against Kraugel, who's the peak of control.〕

〔Peak Sword and Ibellein are highly likely to be eliminated.〕

The experts started speculating ahead of the match. The evaluation of Peak Sword was very cold. Peak Sword had a disadvantage against Kraugel because the characteristics of his class were weaker than the other participants. It was natural to analyze that he couldn't defeat Kraugel when he had a gap between attacks.

The Koreans couldn't deny it.

“It will be very difficult for Peak Sword.”

“Peak Sword is a bit dubious. He's overwhelming when supporting a team, but there are too many vulnerabilities when fighting solo. There's no answer when his opponent is Kraugel.”

No matter how much they thought, it was difficult to expect anything from Peak Sword. People thought that the chance of South Korea becoming first was gone. But Grid thought differently.

‘Peak Sword has the highest possibility of winning.’

Grid was someone who knew exactly the power of Kraugel last year.

'He has a paper body. He just needs to be hit.'

Bloodstone. It was the best mineral that Grid acquired as a reward in last year's National Competition. The Iyarugt's Sheath that was made from it fit very well with Peak Sword. It wasn't something Grid intended from the beginning, but it ended up like this.

*Duguen! Duguen!*

Grid's expectations were amplified.

◊ ◊ ◊

〔Wahhhh! It's an overwhelming attack power!!〕

*Jjejeong!*

*Jjeejeeeong!*

Chris, the first challenger of Breaking the Hero, did as well as everyone expected. He blocked the swift attacks of the Hero while hitting back with his greatsword.

*Puok!*

In the end, the body of the Hero was damaged by the greatsword.

"Cough!"

The Hero perceived the danger and developed Super Sensitivity. The evasion rate and accuracy of the Hero was instantaneously amplified. The Chris of last year wouldn't have been able to handle the Hero in this state. But Chris had been hunting harder than anyone in the past year. This was how he could maintain the number one ranking. He had encountered Super Sensitivity multiple times due to his 'Great Swordsman Hunting' hidden quest and quickly blocked the Hero with the wide area attack of his second class, Tyrant.

In the end.

*Kwajajak!*

At the end of the fight, Chris succeeded in breaking the Hero. It took him 19 minutes to turn the Hero to grey. It was 20 minutes shorter than the time it took for last year's Grid to be defeated by Kraugel. He was a strong candidate to be the winner.

"Wow, really great."

"I realize how big a year is after seeing this."

Last year. People thought that the confrontation between Kraugel and Grid were on a different dimension. At the end of a fierce battle, Kraugel was victorious. Now one year later. No, to be exact, it was one year and three months. Last year's Kraugel was no longer the best. He seemed like nothing in front of Chris, the first ranked player. Everyone was realizing how great the power of time was when Damian challenged the Hero.

The Hero was once again defeated by Damian, who used the strong defense of a paladin, various buffs, and the pope skills to win. Damian took 20 minutes and 55 seconds to take down the Hero. It was two minutes slower than Chris.

"Ugh, gold medal..."

Damian became frustrated by the fact that he lost first place.

'What a monster... '

Chris and the other participants were unable to close their mouths. It was because Damian's attack was incredibly powerful. It was comparable to a major damage dealer using the greatsword. His defense was also several times higher.

'Watching him get beaten up by Grid... '

'...I didn't know he was so strong.'

The Overgeared members pledged not to be enemies with Damian.

Then.

"I'm next."

The third challenger was Peak Sword. He went on stage without any expectations and

faced the Hero.

‘What pressure...’

The Hero, which recreated Kraugel from a year and three months ago, had already been defeated two times. This didn’t mean he was weak. Peak Sword forgot to breathe the moment he faced the Hero in a one on one match. The Hero caught the moment he was distracted.

*Teong!*

The Hero narrowed the distance to Peak Sword in an instant.

*Clink!*

Peak Sword used Draw Sword. He was also a strong representative of his country. He restored his breathing.

“Annihilate.”

*Flash!*

Iyarugt showed a beautiful appearance as it was pulled from the red and transparent sheath. At that moment.

[Iyarugt, who is 100% charged with magic power, is in an intoxicated state. He has lost his ego and is running wild.]

[The conditions of use for Iyarugt has been changed to ‘person to be sacrificed.’]

[It’s impossible to summon Iyarugt.]

[Iyarugt’s damage has increased by 500%.]

[Iyarugt’s state is delivered to Peak Sword through Iyarugt’s Sheath.]

*Sakak-!*

Among all the skills that existed in Satisfy, Draw Sword combined the best attack power and speed, drawing a red color in the air.

“What?”

“What’s this?”

Chris, the other participants, commentators from various broadcasting companies, and viewers were simultaneously amazed. It was because the Hero’s health gauge fell to the bottom with a single blow.

“...!”

The Hero was more surprised than anyone and stopped attacking, stepping back. He lost a large amount of health and entered defense mode, judging that he was in danger. This was the limit of an artificial intelligence. The original Kraugel wouldn’t have made such a stupid mistake.

*Clink!*

The Hero didn’t fight back, making it easy for Peak Sword to retrieve his sword.

[Iyarugt has been picked up by his sheath! 50% of your health has been lost!]

Peak Sword ignored the notification window and attacked again.

*Sakak-!*

The Hero used Super Sensitivity to try and evade, but it was impossible to escape the moment it had allowed Peak Sword to retrieve his sword. The Hero was hit once again and died. Just two blows. This was what it took Peak Sword to bring down the Hero.

Then.

*Swaaaaah.*

Peak Sword turned to grey.

# Chapter 762

Only one minute. Peak Sword defeated an existence that people perceived as the best in a very short time. Peak Sword might've died as well, but people didn't care about this part.

"No way! A bug!"

Those who worshipped the Hero denied reality.

"Isn't this enough to beat Kraugel this year?"

"The real top is neither Kraugel or Grid, it's Peak Sword."

Some busybodies enjoyed the situation. A whirlwind of confusion swept across the globe. But Peak Sword didn't know this.

"Pant... pant..."

Peak Sword had died in exchange for using Iyarugt's intoxicated state. His entire body was soaked with sweat when he logged out. It would've been a failure if he missed a single attack. In the midst of this heavy burden, fighting the Hero was intimidating for Peak Sword. The mental power consumed was too great.

'God Grid who can fight this monster for dozens of minutes...' '

Grid's presence became even bigger as Peak Sword lay in the capsule and shivered.

Grid, who had fought the Hero one year and three months ago, couldn't help looking great to Peak Sword.

In addition, this year's Grid made the item 'Iyarugt's Sheath,' which could devastate last year's Kraugel in two blows.

"Truly God Grid... he's a god.'

"...Player Peak Sword? Player Peak Sword!"

“Ah.”

Peak Sword woke up from his thoughts. He looked up from the capsule and saw the host approaching. The excited host pushed the microphone towards him.

“You did a great job! People are wondering how you beat the sky above the sky in just one minute and one second. Have you been hiding your skills until now?”

At the time of last year’s National Competition, Peak Sword had been branded ‘useless Peak Sword.’ Despite being in the top 15 of the unified rankings, he didn’t win a single medal. Then this year, Peak Sword’s unified ranking fell to the 20th place. People hadn’t expected him to play an active role in this year’s competition. Yet he showed a reversal.

The host’s eyes shone like lanterns while the crowd was breathless. Peak Sword realized that the world was focused on himself and wiped the sweat rolling down his cheek. Then he spoke with his best expression.

“Do you know Overgeared?”

“...”

“Do you know God Grid?”

“...”

It was unfortunate. It was impossible to get a normal interview with Peak Sword, who was fascinated by the power of Iyarugt’s Sheath and Grid’s items. He missed the chance to be reborn as a top star in the world.

[The secret to Peak Sword’s gold medal is Grid’s items?]

[Grid who makes the useless Peak Sword useful.]

[(Column) If Grid took part in Breaking the Hero, could he knock down the Hero faster than Peak Sword?]

And so on. Headlines around the world were concentrating on Grid rather than Peak

Sword.

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“God Gridded!”

After the breaking the hero and piercing the waterfall events ended. Peak Sword wore the two gold medals that held the wishes of 50 million people and ran straight into the waiting room. He grasped both of Grid's hands and cried out.

“Amazing! I won a gold medal thanks to your item! You are really the best! A god!”

“...”

*Spit spit! Spit spit spit!*

Peak Sword was so excited that he kept spitting while he talked. Grid's face became terribly soaked.

“No, how did you make this monster-like sheath?”

“That...”

[Iyarugt's Sheath]

Durability: 200/200

\* Iyarugt's demonic power is supplied to Iyarugt's Sheath. 1% demonic energy will be charged every 10 seconds.

\* Drawing Iyarugt consumes Iyarugt's demonic energy. 1% demonic energy will be lost per second.

\* Once 20% magic power is charged, Iyarugt will enter the satisfied state. At this point, Iyarugt will easily submit to the owner and gains 20% attack power. This state is maintained for 30 seconds after the sword is drawn. The cooldown time of Draw Sword is reset.

\* Once magic power is charged to 70%, Iyarugt will enter the ‘excited’ state. At this

point, Iyarugt won't listen to the owner's commands and will go at his own pace. This state is maintained for 70 seconds after Draw Sword. The cooldown time of Draw Sword is reset.

\* Once magic power is charged to 100%, Iyarugt will enter the 'intoxicated' state. At this time, Iyarugt will recognize the owner as his prey. The damage of Iyarugt's drawn sword will increase by 500%. The user will lose 50% of its health in 4 seconds and will die within 30 seconds. In order to avoid death, the sword must be retrieved within 10 seconds and Draw Sword can't be used for two minutes while demonic energy is declining. The moment Draw Sword is used again, death is instantaneous.

Conditions of Use: None. However, the weapon is limited to Iyarugt.

Grid had succeeded in securing bloodstone in the 2nd National Competition. But he couldn't easily find a use for it. Iyarugt was already a sword and the quantity was lacking to make an armor. Then they raided Belial and secured a large number of materials. Bloodstone fell to the side. Grid had neglected the bloodstone only to make a hypothesis before the National Competition.

Maybe the reason why Iyarugt's soul was sealed in a bloodstone sword was because Iyarugt's soul was compatible with bloodstone? Wouldn't Iyarugt become stronger if a sheath was made with bloodstone? Grid was obsessed with reinforcing his items before facing Kraugel and immediately made a sheath. The result was Iyarugt's Sheath. It was a beautiful sheath that fit the standards of Iyarugt.

"As you can see, a powerful sheath was born. It's strong, but the penalties are huge."

Iyarugt's satisfied state had no merit for Grid, who had the Enlightenment Sword. Even with a 20% increase in attack power, Iyarugt was weak compared to the Enlightenment Sword. The same was true for the excited Iyarugt, who was uncontrollable.

Then what about Iyarugt's intoxicated state? As it happened, Iyarugt's intoxicated state also wasn't attractive to Grid. There was a 500% increase in pure attack power but it could only be used safely for three seconds. The damage wasn't high compared to the various options of the Enlightenment Sword.

'Of course, the pure attack power is higher than the Enlightenment Sword. But the

Enlightenment Sword is more stable.'

He didn't see the value in swapping out the Enlightenment Sword just for higher damage. Of course, this was only the case when Grid used it 'directly'.

Grid was convinced and reached out to Peak Sword.

"Now, shouldn't you return the items you borrowed?"

The story was different when the God Hands used it. The God Hands didn't have the concept of health and could use the intoxicated Iyarugt with less penalties.

"Y-Yes. Of course."

Peak Sword lay directly in the capsule.

The synergy of Peak Sword and Iyarugt, which boasted a high attack power, was certainly fantastic. But he wasn't entitled to use Iyarugt since he didn't have demonic power. It was only possible to use it when Iyarugt was in the intoxicated state, which meant the damage was bigger than the gains.

The sword was inappropriate for Peak Sword other than a one-off event like the National Competition. Peak Sword wasn't greedy for Iyarugt at all. Just.

"E... Excuse me, God Grid. Once I ask for minerals from this gold medal, can you make a blade and sheath set for me?"

Peak Sword requested carefully. Grid nodded immediately.

"Of course."

A byproduct of a sacred creature. Considering that the power of fire was embedded in the Red Phoenix's Breath, there was a strong possibility that the Blue Dragon Breath contained the power of lightning. Lightning attribute items were likely to have speed increasing options.

"Ask for the Blue Dragon's Breath."

How strong would Peak Sword become? Grid trembled. He felt proud that his skills could help someone grow. And time passed...

〔Now there's only the last event remaining!〕

The National Competition's third day. Eight out of nine events ended, leaving only the closing event. PvP. The big match that the world had been looking forward to for over a year, the moment where Grid and Kraugel would reunite.

“Kuk! Kukukuk! Finally, the moment had come!”

Seuron of Argentina.

“Grid and Kraugel, I can take out these trash with my power!”

Zhang Zheng of China.

“Grid! I will get my promised revenge this year! I will neutralize your items with the power of Erosion!”

Tarma of the former Blood Carnival.

And...

“...”

The sky above the sky.

A total of 32 people were converging on the stage. Of course, Grid was part of them.

South Korea: Gold (6), Silver (1), Bronze (2)

United States: Gold (5), Silver (8), Bronze (4)

“Grid, have strength!”

“Please win this year!”

“Kraugel! Be sure to win this time!”

“The first place in the overall rankings must be the US!”

"Grid! Grid! Grid!!"

"Kraugel! Kraugel! Kraugel!"

The crowd's shouts resonated across Tokyo. Tokyo Dome was heating up. The sky above the sky and the person who nearly reached it. Which one was going to fall this year?

In the midst of the people's cheers and expectations.

"During saint sword drawing."

Grid and Kraugel faced each other on the stage. Grid started talking.

"I was relieved when you got the gold medal and Yura got the silver medal."

"..."

"It was fortunate. You didn't lose. My heart wouldn't be beating this fast if you'd been defeated by someone other than me."

The person who broke the sky must be Grid. It was the last proof remaining before he could reach the top.

"This year, I will surely win."

Kraugel briefly replied to the motivated Grid.

"I'm looking forward to it."

For Kraugel, Grid was a special existence. The only person who victory wasn't guaranteed against. In today's showdown, Kraugel might be more eager than Grid.

# Chapter 763

There was no longer a promised victory.

The 1st National Competition, the 2nd National Competition, the battle between guilds and the successive defeats to Grid and the Overgeared members led to Bubat becoming the symbol of defeat. Numerous people who praised him now turned away from him. Sometimes other people mocked him.

The honor he built up as the leader of the Yak Guild, one of the Seven Guilds, and as the strongest initiator, Crusher, disappeared like a sandcastle. But Bubat wasn't shaken. He didn't shake at all. As a tanker, he was accustomed to being hit. He had a strong mentality from taking blows well.

"This year I will definitely do it."

Bubat was determined before the PvP event of this National Competition.

"I will definitely beat Grid this year"

The reason he was so obsessed with Grid wasn't because of personal grudges. It wasn't simply payback for being defeated. He burned with a sense of challenge because he recognized Grid as a trial to be overcome. He had a desire to develop further.

In addition.

'Father, have strength!'

"This year, be sure to win the gold medal!"

He wanted to be a wonderful dad in the eyes of his two daughters, who were just beginning to grow up.

'Huhut, tomorrow I can meet my cute princesses.'

He remembered his daughters' appearances in the video call last night and smiled. The Chinese representative, Zhang Zheng was waiting for him. Zhang Zheng lay down

in the capsule at the request of the host and provoked Bubat.

"Are all people from Turkey brainless? Or do they have no shame? Why participate in the National Competition every year when you don't get medals? Isn't it a waste of time for other people?"

"Tsk tsk."

Zhang Zheng was still young and had less personality. Bubat clicked his tongue and lay in the capsule. He was 35 years old. It might be different two years ago, but he wasn't easy enough to be provoked by a young man. The host was shouting.

"Before the long awaited first match of PvP, China's Zhang Zheng and Turkey's Bubat are logging in! The showdown between the two players is starting now! It has started!"

"Waaahhhhhh!"

The cheers of the crowd filled Bubat's ears as he closed his eyes in the capsule.

Then.

"Um."

Bubat opened his eyes again in the Lion's Castle. It was the castle that had been the stage of PvP for three years already. Zhang Zheng jumped over the wall and pulled out his weapon immediately.

"Aren't you very solid? Are you a person?"

*Supak!*

Zhang Zheng flew forward while making insidious remarks. His hands held one of the eight strongest weapons obtained from his workforce, the Destruction Sword. It was a powerful weapon that inflicted additional damage to human type targets, had the effect of blocking healing, and dealt damage proportional to the target's health.

*Puk!*

*Puk puk puk!*

Zhang Zheng, who started appearing as a new star in China last year, had the hidden class of 'fighter' and was a master of combat. He could handle all weapons with Weapons Mastery and possessed high strength and agility. It was impossible for Bubat, who had invested most of his stats in stamina, to avoid Zhang Zheng's swordsmanship. The black sword quickly shaved at Bubat's rock-like body. But Zhang Zheng's expression didn't look good. It was because Bubat's health gauge didn't make sense.

'Why does he have such high defense?'

Bubat's tanking power last year was already enough to surprise Grid. In the first place, the reason why he could be called the strongest initiator was because he could jump into the enemy's base with his overwhelming defense.

*Snap!*

Bubat succeeded in grabbing the wrists of the confused Zhang Zheng and smiled.

"I'm not called the Yak for nothing. Did you bring a small knife to catch a cow?"

"You boar-like bastard...!"

Zhang Zheng sensed the crisis and attempted to shake off Bubat's touch. But it was wishful thinking. A Crusher didn't miss the opponent he had caught.

"Go to Hell!"

*Kwajajajak!*

It was the Crusher's move that slammed the enemy's head into the ground, causing all types of status conditions. This skill had very high attack power. His attack power was influenced by his stamina stat, resulting in a force similar to a damage dealer.

"...!"

Zhang Zheng couldn't even scream as his head was slammed to the ground. His vision was blurred by the darkness of the ground.

"Ahat!"

Bubat wrapped an arm around the waist of Zhang Zheng, stuck upside down in the ground. It wasn't a gesture of affection.

"It will hurt more this time. Huup!"

Bubat gritted his teeth!

*Sok!* Zhang Zheng's body was lifted up like a sweet potato and descended again. It was like a gyro drop.

'Ick!'

As his vision moved from the sky to the ground at the speed of light, Zhang Zheng felt an instinctive fear. Goosebumps crept over his skin.

'You dare...!'

Zhang Zheng gritted his teeth. He overcame the chaos state caused by 'Go to Hell.'

"You dare do this to me! I will slaughter you!"

He abandoned the Destruction Sword and pulled out a dagger. It was a lethal weapon that increased accuracy, had a probability of disregarding the defensive power of the target, and inflicted damage equal to the Sword of Destruction.

*Puk! Puk puk puk!*

"Kuk...!"

Bubat's face distorted as Zhang Zheng in his arms stabbed Bubat's side. Zhang Zheng's attacks that had a chance of ignoring defense were effective against Bubat. The Crusher had a passive skill that allowed him not to be harmed over a certain level of damage, but it was scary when the low damage accumulated.

"Ohhhhhh!"

*Kuwaaaaang!*

Bubat endured the pain and slammed Zhang Zheng into the ground.

“Kiyaaaaah! Kieek! Kyaack! Keok!”

Zhang Zheng continued to stab at Bubat's side as he was slammed into the ground. Of course, the one who suffered the most damage was Zhang Zheng. The Descending Death boasted a damage twice as high as Go to Hell. Zhang Zheng looked like he was just about to die as his head was stuck in the ground. It was a quiet match.

*Peok peok! Peok!*

Bubat's attack continued. Zhang Zheng was continuously in the ‘stunned’ state. Zhang Zheng boasted a high defense due to his items. However, his defensive power fell due to the influence of Descending Death and his health was rapidly consumed.

“This is the end!”

Bubat shouted as firmly as he could. He emitted a red light. It was the forerunner to one of the Crusher's few attack skills, Watermelon Break.

*Jeeeeeeong!*

The moment when Bubat's hammer swept across Zhang Zheng's unprotected abdomen.

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

Zhang Zheng's armor exploded. It wasn't the effect of Watermelon Break. It was the ‘there will be triple the damage reflection if you receive a certain amount of damage’ effect of Zhang Zheng's legendary rated armor.

“Ugh!”

Bubat was caught in the explosion and collapsed, while Zhang Zheng overcame the stun and raised his body. Then he unleashed sharp attacks on Bubat's body.

*Puk!*

*Seokeok!*

Blood spurted. Zhang Zheng swapped between eight types of weapons and started to maximize the power of various skills. The weapons had effects such as reducing defense power, dealing fixed damage, etc. The effect of the skills gradually weakened

Bubat's rock-like body.

"You damn bastard! Do you know who I am? Kyaak!" Zhang Zheng stabbed the fallen Bubat without a break. Zhang Zheng' shining eyes as he attacked made he seem like a killer in the movies. The organizers minimized the bloody effect but it was still a cruel scene.

Finally.

"B-Bubat has been logged out!!"

Bubat turned to grey. However, Zhang Zheng kept stabbed the ground where Bubat had been.

"Kyaak! Kiyaaaaaah!"

It was a terrible thing. The sight filled the public with fear. Even the Chinese supporting Zhang Zheng felt creeped out and fell silent. Bubat's wife, watching the competition on TV, had to hurriedly send her daughters to their room. It was an appalling atmosphere.

"Cute."

Grid muttered as he prepared for his match. For Grid, who had the experience of meeting the read madman Agnus, Zhang Zheng was just at the level of a puppy barking.

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"The atmosphere will rise."

Tarma's lips curved as he prepared for the second match in the round of 32. It was good for him that Zhang Zheng, classified as part of the new generation, had beaten Bubat. Since he was matched with Grid from the beginning, he wanted the public's attention.

He looked at Grid and smiled. That's right. Tarma was assured of his victory. He was confident that he could easily neutralize Grid after using Erosion to temporarily destroy Grid's strongest weapon.

"I will take you down today and get rid of the humiliation of the past."

Tarma lost his reputation after being defeated by Grid in just three seconds at the 2nd National Competition. He became insignificant in the industry and requests stopped coming in. He lost wealth. Was that all? After Blood Carnival was dissolved due to Grid, he became a fugitive and hid on the East Continent, living a life of hell. Life on the East Continent was very difficult compared to the West Continent. It was truly awful.

However, due to his desire for revenge, he eventually got Erosion.

"Kukuk! Grid...! I will kill you!"

There was a stir in Tarma's body. He felt pleasure as he imagined the glory that could be gained by knocking down Grid.

〔After Bubat's sudden defeat, South Korea's Grid and Greece's Tarma are on stage.〕

〔Player Tarma is notorious as a member of the former Blood Carnival. He's an assassin who's evaluated as being better than the god of killing, Faker.〕

But last year, he was defeated by Grid in just three seconds and his image changed a lot. Now people didn't have high expectations for him. At least until yesterday.

〔Though the rumors about him have been overstated, Tarma has done great in the asura path event in the past few days. He beat his competitors and won a gold medal, proving that the rumors about him weren't exaggerated.〕

The level of skill that Tarma showed in the asura path event was certainly at the highest level. He looked like a powerhouse who was above Chris, Damian, Pon, and Regas. It wasn't an exaggeration. Once the asura path event ended yesterday, Tarma revealed in an interview how great he was.

'I am the one who occupied the Overgeared Guild's Cork Island. The Overgeared members guarding the island were killed by me. Kukuk, if you think I'm lying then go to Peak Sword and ask. Peak Sword was brutally killed by me. I was just caught off guard when defeated by Grid last year!'

It was a shocking interview. The media investigated to confirm the truth and as a result, Tarma's remarks were proven to be true. Tarma had caused the Overgeared Guild to suffer the bitter taste of defeat. There were people who thought that Tarma

might have a chance to beat Grid.

At this time.

'I want to use it.'

Grid felt a strong urge as he faced Tarma on stage. 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. It was a desire to show the strongest skill he got from the Undefeated King to the public. Why? He would wash away the stigma of a chuuni! Grid wanted to prove that the 'Grid is a chuuni' video on the Internet was wrong.

Thus, it was fortunate that he met Tarma in the first match. It was likely that Tarma's level would be equal or higher than Grid's since Tarma had been an unofficial ranker for a long time.

'After building up fighting energy, I will perfectly finish it off with 100,000 Army Massacre Sword.'

Grid lay down in the capsule. He opened his eyes in Lion's Castle and faced Tarma.

Tarma cried out.

"I! I have been waiting for this moment! Kuahahaha!"

*Taack!*

Tarma moved. An assassin was a combat class with low health and defense, but it demonstrated exceptional attack power and agility. Tarma's speed was enormous since he was considered to be at the peak of assassins. He reached Grid instantly and attacked. Of course, it wasn't an attack with all his power. Tarma was cautious, unlike how he outwardly looked. He was planning to explore first.

*Swaeek!*

A quick strike with minimal movements.

*Puk!*

Tarma's yellow dagger stabbed Grid's shoulder and he moved back after confirming the damage, fearing a counterattack from Grid. At that moment.

*Peeeeeeong!*

Grid reached the fastest speed with Alex's Quick Gloves and quickly reached Tarma. The roar of black flames, as terrible as a dragon's breath, swallowed Tarma up.

[The target has died!]

“...?”

Grid was upset by the rising notification window.

〔Ah! This is the strongest assassin! Tarma has disappeared like a lie!!〕

〔He can't be seen anywhere! How shocking!〕

The commentators, spectators, and viewers weren't aware that Tarma had died. The ash pillar effect, which symbolized a player's death, was buried by the brilliant effects of the black flames. Grid sweated as he stood alone in the castle. He had to stand there for a few seconds before the host belatedly realized the situation and announced the end of the match.

# Chapter 764

1.6 seconds. It was the time it took Tarma to reach Grid with Shadow Shift. After that, Tarma's dagger stabbed Grid's shoulder and it took another 0.5 seconds for Grid's sword to reach Tarma's body.

Yes, just 2.1 seconds. It was the time it took to defeat Tarma. It broke his previous record of 3 seconds.

“...”

Tokyo Dome fell silent.

*Duk.*

Some viewers in South Korea dropped their jokbal on the floor. They were eating spicy jokbal instead of chicken. The viewers and TV commentators belatedly opened their mouths.

〔Skill... Player Grid has acquired a powerful skill.〕

〔Ah...! Yes! C-Correct! That's right!〕

Most of Grid's attack skills required the preparatory actions of a 'sword dance.' Sometimes it was an advantage, but there were more disadvantages. There were blind spots compared to the immediate skills of the combat specialized classes. It was viewed as Grid's weak spot. This year's Grid had overcome his weakness.

〔Player Grid is a hero who captured the Behen Archipelago. He seems to have acquired the strongest skill as a reward from the Behen Archipelago.〕

〔He's born again as a complete body... 〕

Nobody expected that what Grid used to kill Tarma was a 'basic' attack. No, they couldn't even imagine it. People rarely imagined things that broke common sense. The experts interpreted it as Grid acquiring a new ultimate skill. The audience and viewers saw the replay video that was repeated several times and agreed.

〔A quick fire skill boasting a range that even the fastest assassin can't avoid... Ah! Maybe it's a black fire dragon...!〕

〔Black fire dragon...? Do you mean the power that Player Lauel mentioned several times?〕

〔Yes, that's right. Lauel had said it in an interview with various media. The power of a black dragon was sealed in his right hand and he served his master Grid with this power sealed. Maybe Grid has released the seal of that power... 〕

〔I think the black fire dragon is a reward from some type of quest. It's really scary if it's true... 〕

This was an interpretation that started to spread, but few people were concerned about this part. It didn't matter if it was a black fire dragon or not. Either way, Grid had acquired the ultimate skill. The anticipation towards the battle between Grid and Kraugel increased.

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"Player Tarma! Tell me how you feel about being logged out in two seconds!"

"Shut up!"

After the match. Tarma hurriedly came down from the stage like he was ashamed. He was terrified. He feared Grid who disbanded Blood Carnival... The fear that he had forgotten filled Tarma's body and mind. Tarma's body was shaking as he rushed to the waiting room. Tarma realized. The fact that the power gap with Grid couldn't be filled up no matter how he struggled.

'I can't face that monster.'

He didn't know what type of harm he would come to from the Cork Island incident.

*Scoff.*

"...?!"

Tarma stopped as he was running away with a pale face. Zhang Zheng was leaning of one side of the corridor leading to the waiting rooms, laughing sat Tarma.

"Do you think it makes sense to die in one blow? The old generation is just a joke."

"You...!"

Tarma's face reddened. His grudge against this bastard, who didn't even know Grid's power, was very large. His eyes instantly filled with killing intent. But it quickly died down. Tarma confirmed that there were bodyguards by Zhang Zheng's side and lost his momentum. He snorted at the sight.

"Do you think you're good enough to look down on me? This small fry who was just born? I think the world has gone crazy if someone like you is walking around."

"You...! I'm a third-generation rookie!"

10 new rookies were born every year. They used the know-how accumulated by senior players and information released to the world to speed up their growth. They believed that their growth was faster than their predecessors due to talent. The older players were just ridiculous.

"I can assure you. You will also die in two seconds. You will die in a single strike from Grid. Grid is a monster and you aren't better than me!"

Tarma eagerly hoped it would be like this. He didn't like this bastard before him.

'Shit! I never thought the day would come when I will support Grid!'

Tarma disappeared after ranting.

Zhang Zheng shouted towards his shabby rear view. "This dog only knows how to talk! I will show you how incompetent the old generation are! Understood?"

Time was proportional to developed. This also applied to humans. There were far more great people in the science age than in history. The new generation was unconditionally better than the old generation. These were Zhang Zheng's thoughts. It was his personal thoughts!

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"Grid, I won't challenge you again."

"..."

On the way back to the waiting room. Grid met Bubat, who was waiting for him. There was a bitter smile on Bubat's face.

"I realized it after being defeated by Zhang Zheng. I have no hope in a one on one battle."

During the 1st National Competition and 2nd National Competition's PvP event. Bubat won against everyone except for Grid. He was overlooked because he kept being defeated by Grid. It was the limits of a Crusher. After all, a Crusher was an initiator. He had weak attack power. It was possible to neutralize the target, but he didn't have the force to finish them off.

It took Bubat many years to acknowledge the painful reality.

"It can't be helped. Apart from Grid, I have only fought with weak people. I thought I was really strong. Therefore, I was burning with a will to challenge you. But I realized it in this fight with Zhang Zheng. It's impossible to beat an opponent who has reached a certain level."

"Hrmm..."

Grid showed some confusion because he didn't know how to respond. It had been three years since the start of his bad relationship with Bubat and there was no reason to like him. Grid was clearly aware that Bubat took part in the invasion of Patrian and put the Overgeared Guild in a crisis. Such a person wouldn't be coming up to him with a good heart.

Bubat confirmed that Grid was at a loss and waved his hand. "No, I don't mean to burden you. It's too presumptuous to try and start a new relationship with you. Just... I just..."

Bubat's eyes twitched as he recalled the phone call to his wife a moment ago. The shock of his children due to the cruel actions of Zhang Zheng constantly rang in his ears.

"...I hope that you don't lose to that cruel boy."

"The person called Zhang Zheng?"

"That's right. Please be careful. If that type of person wins over you..."

It would no longer be a dream stage for his daughters and other children. Bubat wanted to provide information to help Grid win.

"Don't be too careless against the rookie. Zhang Zheng's armor has an option of reflecting damage by three times. It is dangerous even for you."

It was terrible when thinking of Grid's strong attacks being reflected with three times the damage. Maybe Grid would lose. Bubat came to Grid because he was concerned.

"Three times the damage reflection... Hmm, I understand."

Grid nodded with a calm expression and passed by Bubat.

*Step step.*

"..."

Grid's footsteps gradually faded away. He didn't even bother saying farewell to Bubat. Bubat knew what he did to Grid and the Overgeared members. He couldn't expect to be greeted with familiarity. He was standing there quietly when he heard Grid's voice.

"You are weak."

"..."

"As you said, it's in a one on one match."

"...?"

"If we meet again in a war, I hope that we are no longer enemies."

"...Grid."

The Overgeared King acknowledged him in a war? Bubat was thrilled. A bright smile

appeared on his gloomy face.

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The PvP round of 32 passed quickly. The relatively weak people were dropped out and only the qualified people advanced to the round of 16.

There was also Sword Saint Kraugel. He met winning candidate Seuron in the round of 32 and defeated Seuron with skills that were more overwhelming than last year. People took it for granted that Kraugel, who was several times stronger than last year, would win.

On the other hand, Grid was shocked. He was aware that Kraugel was at least 50 levels lower than he was last year.

'Not even reaching level 300 yet...'

Maybe. Was this Grid's last chance to win against Kraugel? As time passed, Grid wouldn't be able to reach this genius. The moment Grid thought this.

*Duguen! Duguen!*

He couldn't help smiling. The higher the sky that was Kraugel, the most Grid instinctively felt that he could build a higher tower.

"Hey, Bangzi. What are you thinking?" (*Bangzi = A derogatory word that some Chinese people use for Koreans.*)

Zhang Zheng. The Chinese player was Grid's opponent in the round of 16.

"Are you thinking of packing up and going home?"

"What bullshit are you saying?"

"...?"

Zhang Zheng was confused by Grid's words. Until now, the 'existing powerhouses' tended to cling to their dignity. They didn't reveal their true colors until they were provoked. Zhang Zheng enjoyed seeing them lose their patience. However, Grid cursed easily despite being on a throne.

"I'm not ignoring you just because you're weak. If you want to be respected, conduct yourself well."

Grid belatedly turned off the microphone. Grid scoffed and lay in the capsule, while Zhang Zheng's face belatedly turned red.

"Bangzi...! This damn Bangzi dares...! Don't you know who I am?"

Not ignoring him just because he was weak? In other words, Zhang Zheng was weak?

"Asshole!" Zhang Zheng hurriedly lay down in the capsule. He wanted to show Grid the taste of defeat as soon as possible. "Login! Loginnn!"

# Chapter 765

There were many dialects around the world. It was said that there were more than 100 dialects in China due to its large land mass and population.

"Standard language unification."

As soon as he connected to Satisfy, Grid ended the dialect interpretation system. It was the reason why he heard Zhang Zheng's Yanbian dialect translated into Korean.

"I personally hate Yanbian."

"What?"

Ruined castle walls weathered by dry winds. Zhang Zheng emerged from behind them and declared, "Grid, don't think you will die painlessly."

It had been two years and three months since Zhang Zheng started Satisfy. He took great pride in using his wealth of information and tremendous talent to catch up with existing players, becoming a top ranked player beyond the second generation rookies.

Grid? Kraugel? He didn't believe the people at the top were his opponents.

"My confidence has grown after I participated in the National Competition. Existing players are weak. They're rotten and dull-witted. It's worthless to be the king of the trash. Isn't that right?"

To describe the current Satisfy, it was like a lion getting lost in a forest. Wolves and foxes were abundant. Zhang Zheng believed he was a talented person who would fill the empty position of a lion.

"I'll be the master of this forest."

He would win. Zhang Zheng was sure of it. The talent that allowed him to jump over the second generation rookies that the old generation claimed to be geniuses was the basis of his conviction. He was sure that he was better than Grid.

"You want to cut me up?"

Zhang Zheng gave a wicked and arrogant smile as he showed eight types of legendary weapons in order. They were the most powerful weapons with different users. The unusual appearances showed they were enhanced.

"Ohh..."

The crowd made sounds of admiration due to the spectacular effects that occurred every time Zhang Zheng changed weapons.

"It doesn't matter how many weapons you take out. I won't give you a chance to wield them." Grid said with a nonchalant expression. It was enough to stimulate Zhang Zheng.

"The king of petty wild dogs! How can a dog challenge a lion? Today I will show you reality! I will make you realize how trivial and frivolous the world you have reigned over is!"

Zhang Zheng's face was red as he yelled. He was like a demon as his axe rose in the air. Grid smiled bitterly.

'A new generation mutant...'

Grid was the king of a nation. He had information that general players couldn't possess and knew about Zhang Zheng. A genius who achieved unparalleled growth above the third generation 10 Rookies. Someone who was said to transcend the second generation.

'I was expecting a lot.'

In fact, Zhang Zheng was just a lump of arrogance. Grid felt a sense of responsibility when he saw Zhang Zheng disparaging the old generation. He felt responsible to eliminate the prejudices about the old generation. It was an obligation Grid felt for himself and his precious colleagues. Grid didn't want the people who had paved the way to be called trivial.

*Paaaat!*

Four golden hands appeared behind Grid. They were armed with Mjolnir, the most

powerful status inducing weapon. Zhang Zheng's eyes shone at the appearance of the famous God Hands.

"Kukuk! Kuhahaha! Indeed! This is it! You're admitting that you are afraid of me!"

In the past National Competition PvP matches, it was rare for Grid to use the God Hands. Apart from when facing Kraugel, there were no cases where Grid actively used the God Hands from the beginning. From Zhang Zheng's point of view, it was a clear acknowledgement. It proved that Grid put him in the same class as Kraugel!

The crowd was also excited.

"Grid is already pulling out the God Hands!"

"Zhang Zheng seems to be strong..."

"Indeed, the strongest of the third generation of rookies!"

Zhang Zheng was the one who broke Bubat, one of the strongest of the old generation. In a situation where Grid revealed his power from the beginning against the monster rookie, people were forced to appreciate Zhang Zheng even more. In particular, China had a festive atmosphere.

"Finally, a hero has emerged in our great nation!"

"He's a different genius from Hao, who bows down to Grid every time! Despite being a newcomer, Grid is nervous about him!"

"Zhang Zheng is just the beginning. There are many people in our great nation and the younger generation is evolving every day. The descendants of the heroes in history will continue to appear and occupy the world stage!"

The Chinese pride in their country was the highest in the world. They were drunk in the name of nationalism and dreamt of a brilliant future. They didn't doubt that China would be one of the leading superpowers in Satisfy. The 1.5 billion population were excited.

"Admitting that I am afraid? Me? Of you?" Then Grid gave them despair. "You're just a fly to me. I don't have to catch you directly. Summon Iyarugt."

*Kurururung!*

Grid pulled out Iyarugt and it roared. Grid couldn't hold it as a blood red light scattered all over the place.

*Paaaat!*

Iyarugt emerged from Grid's grasp and flew into the sky. The translucent red color of the smelting bloodstone started to darken. The ancient golden characters gave it a mysterious and beautiful sight.

'What?'

Zhang Zheng and the crowd was dazzled by the amazing sight.

*Kuoooooh-*

Iyarugt didn't move anymore. The light being emitted calmed down and everything became silent.

"..."

It was static, like time had stopped. It was a short moment.

*Paaaat!*

The static broke as a red ball popped out from Iyarugt, still floating in the air. Hell's best swordsman, a Sword Demon, Great Demon Zepar's only rival, etc. It was the moment when the soul of Iyarugt, who had all types of titles attached to him, appeared before the public.

"What's this...?"

Zhang Zheng belatedly became anxious and moved back. His instincts told him that he shouldn't let the red sword complete its actions. However, it was already too late. Iyarugt's soul exploded like the starlight of the universe and formed a shape.

An old man bent over. He had a sharp horn sticking out from his forehead, was covered with a flaming red light, and his eyes bulged like developed muscles. The iris, visible in the shadowy eyes, were as black as the deep sea.

"Demonkin...!"

A player could summon a demonkin? No, they knew it was possible for a third advancement black magician, but the blacksmith Grid? Zhang Zheng paled at the unexpected situation. Then the elderly old man summoned in front of him took a deep breath, enjoying the sweet air that entered deep into his lungs.

"Sweet."

He had the magic power of a lower demonkin, but his swordsmanship was enough for him to compete with great demons. Marbas, one of the major powers in hell evaluated Iyarugt as 'one who can change the landscape of hell.'

*Sakak-!*

He held the floating Iyarugt and moved towards Zhang Zheng.

"Keok...!"

[A weakness in your swordsmanship is exposed.]

[Evasion rate is ignored, defense has dropped, and you will receive critical damage.]

[You have suffered 12,150 damage.]

"K-Kuock...!"

One sword. Yet this strike caused Zhang Zheng to lose one-fifth of his health. What the hell was this demonkin? Zhang Zheng was dumbfounded by the emergence of an unexpected monster.

*Snap!*

It was hard to believe that Iyarugt was an old man as he moved and pushed Zhang Zheng to the ground.

*Peeeeok!*

Zhang Zheng couldn't resist and fell to the ground.

"..."

The Chinese spectators and viewers were mute at the helpless appearance of Zhang Zheng.

◊ ◊ ◊

Name: Iyarugt

Age: ?? Gender: Male

Species: Horned Demon

Title: Best Swordsman of Hell

\* When sword type weapons are used, the attack power is doubled. There is a 100% chance of a critical strike when hitting a weak point. Evasion rate will increase by 50%.

Strength: 3,503 Stamina: 1,090

Agility: 3,201 Intelligence: 330

Skills: Swordsman's Eyes (S), One Way of Life (SS-), Sword Dance Explosion (SS), Volcanic Circulation (SS), Hell Moon Cut (SS), Sublime Sword (SS+)

A horned demon classified as a lower demon. As a result of training in swordsmanship without giving up, he became the strongest swordsman of hell. But he failed to overcome the limit of his birth and was defeated in a battle with the great demon Zepar and died.

After that, his soul was cursed and attached to a sword.

\* By winning in a battle against the strong, he can regain a feeling of life. Repeating this a few more times can recover all his skills (1/10)

\* You must win against an opponent who is recognized as an 'enemy.'

\* Iyarugt has a strong camaraderie that will develop into liking towards you.

It specified that Iyarugt hadn't regained his strength yet. In one on one fights with the current Grid, Iyarugt would be hit like a dog every time by Grid. Of course, from a general point of view, he was a powerful demonkin. His health and defense weren't much different from normal players, but his attack attack was based on a definitive critical attack and almost matched Grid's attack power. Even within the Overgeared Guild, there were only around 10 people who could match Iyarugt's attack power.

The third advancement Zhang Zheng couldn't afford to be hit by him. What about the control skill that Zhang Zheng was so proud of? It didn't work in front of Iyarugt. What about Zhang Zheng's items? They were trivial to Iyarugt after being hit several times by Grid's items.

"Kuaaaah!"

Zhang Zheng roared with humiliation and raised his body. He tried to swing the sword that dealt 'extra damage to demonkin.' But Iyarugt swung his sword again and Zhang Zheng's attack was in vain. Zhang Zheng glared at Grid.

"You! You Bangzi bastard! You're a coward! You're afraid of a fair fight so you brought a monster like this!!"

There was a limit to the attack power of a pet. Their stats were low if their level didn't exceed their master's. However, the demonkin in front of him dealt 10,000 damage. It was well beyond Grid's attack power that Zhang Zheng had estimated. Zhang Zheng believed that Grid had temporarily contracted with the demonkin through a special quest. In other words, it was interpreted as a trump card. He had no idea that Iyarugt was a Grid specific summon.

Grid was conscious of the cameras focused on himself and Iyarugt as he answered, "What damn monster? He's just my pet."

"What? What nonsense are you saying?"

Zhang Zheng rushed towards Grid.

[Black King's Armor]

Rating: Legendary

Durability: 299/299 Defense: 699

- \* Blocks incoming damage by 7%.
- \* There is a 30% of a stealth effect in the dark.
- \* There is a 20% increase in defense in the dark.
- \* Agility +50 in the darkness.
- \* Once 30,000 damage is accumulated, three times the magic damage will be reflected back. At this time, the armor's durability is reduced by 50. In addition, the effect isn't activated if more than 30,000 damage is received at once.

Zhang Zheng was determined to beat Grid and the demonkin with the strongest armor. Theoretically, it was possible. The Black King's Armor reflected a damage of 90,000, which wasn't enough for a player to endure! But...

*Peok peok!*

[You have been stiffened.]

[You have been stiffened.]

[You have been stiff...]

“Ugh! Keok! Eek!”

He couldn't reach Grid. From the moment the God Hands wielded Mjolnir, Zhang Zheng fell into the hell of infinite stiffness. Zhang Zheng kept screaming as he was hit in the head with a hammer. It was the appearance of a cheap dance as his head moved from the right to left. Grid laughed as an infinite CC that could be called a scam was used.

“Didn't I tell you? You won't even have a chance to swing your sword.”

Originally, Grid was the representative of an arrogant person. If he truly expressed any grudges he had, he would make Zhang Zheng look charming.

“You...! You lousy jerk! Eek! Keok!”

Zhang Zheng resented Grid's attitude, but he had no way of doing anything. As Zhang Zheng's health was slowly being consumed in units of hundreds, the 1.5 billion population of China fell into shock and despair.

# Chapter 766

[You have suffered 1,950 damage.]

[You have become stiff. You can't take any actions.]

[You have suffered 879 damage.]

[You have become stiff...]

[You have suffered 880 damage...]

“Ugh! Keok! Eek! Kuoh! Kuaah!”

There was a feeling of helplessness, like a fly caught in a spider web. Zhang Zheng roared like a wild beast after being frozen by Mjolnir for a few minutes. It was difficult for him to accept this awful feeling of helplessness that he felt for the first time. Why did he have to be disgraced in front of the world?

‘I won’t be able to raise my head if I’m logged out this way!’

It had been less than an hour since his interview stating that Grid and Kraugel were insignificant. The one who was defeated without Grid lifting a finger would transform into trash that was no different from Tarma.

*Kwaduduk!*

Zhang Zheng wanted to deny this terrible reality. He tried to act. In order to regain his freedom, he looked for a gap.

‘Let’s concentrate!’

He only needed to move his hands once. If he wielded his sword the moment the stiffness was released and defended against the hammer attack, he would be freed. Zhang Zheng calmed his mind and didn’t doubt it. Until now, he had lost his cool at the infinite CCs. But he was confident that he could escape from this hell since a skill with

an infinite effect in Satisfy couldn't exist.

But.

*Peok!*

0.3 seconds.

*Peok peok!*

0.1 seconds, 0.1 seconds, 0.1 seconds and 0.3 seconds again. The four hammers alternated, leaving no gaps in the stiffness. Zhang Zheng tried to focus but he couldn't find the right timing to escape.

"This is ridiculous...!"

It was a scam! Grid was using a bug! The moment that Zhang Zheng was convinced.

[30,000 damage has accumulated. The Black King's Armor feels humiliated!]

*Peeeeeeong!*

The dark armor that Zhang Zheng was wearing flashed red and exploded. It was the prelude to a counterattack. The God Hands were caught in the explosion and flew in every direction, becoming rigid. Then Zhang Zheng was freed from the endless CC.

*Gulp!*

Zhang Zheng immediately drank a health potion and headed to Grid.

"How long did you think you could hide behind that trick?"

Zhang Zheng was excited. The moment when Zhang Zheng tried to aim his sword at Grid.

*Puok!*

[You have suffered 13,050 damage.]

Iyarugt, who had been standing next to Grid with folded arms interfered.

“Keok!”

Zhang Zheng was hit by Iyarugt due to being blinded by Grid. Then he coughed up blood. It was the moment when his hell started again.

*Peok peok! Peok peok peok!*

“Ugh! Eek! Kek!”

The God Hands were released from their stiffness and randomly assaulted Zhang Zheng again. It was the scene where the counterattack that the Chinese crowd were hoping for failed.

[30,000 damage has accumulated. The Black King's Armor feels humiliated!]

“Kiyaaaaah! Bastard! Die! Dieeee!”

During the time that Zhang Zheng was released from the stiffness, he pulled out some chains.

*Chwaruruk!*

The chains stretched out in all directions to restrain the God Hands.

‘That's it!’

Zhang Zheng smiled with satisfaction, took a potion, and rushed to Iyarugt. He realized that he had to beat Iyarugt to get to Grid.

*Chaaeng! Chaeng!*

Zhang Zheng exchanged sword blows. Zhang Zheng recovered his cool and demonstrated 120% of his stats. It was because he had a desire to smash the nasty

Grid. But his momentum didn't last long. While Zhang Zheng was caught in the fight against Iyarugt, Grid had released all the chains restraining the God Hands.

*Peok! Peok peok!*

"Cough! Ugh! Eek!"

*Peeeeeeong!*

Zhang Zheng's armor was hit a few more times by Mjolnir and exploded again. It meant that a lot of damage accumulated during the battle with Iyarugt.

"Bastard! You nasty bastard! Cowardly bastard!!!"

Zhang Zheng bound the God Hands with the chains again and glared at Grid with bloodshot eyes. Grid didn't fight until the end, only relying on his items and pets. It was like a one player fighting game! But what could he do about his anger? Zhang Zheng might be able to match Iyarugt, but he couldn't defeat Iyarugt.

While he was tied up with Iyarugt, Grid untied the chains holding the God Hands. Then he relaxed with a whistle!

"..."

The commentators were silent. It was too uncomfortable to talk about this one-sided and terrible match. On the other hand, Grid...

'It's still incomplete.'

He was watching Zhang Zheng's armor. It wasn't a 'damage reflection every time it was hit' but a 'damage reflection every time a certain amount of damage accumulated?' It reflected a huge three times the damage. Therefore, Zhang Zheng's armor was sure to have a huge penalty.

Grid had expected this from the beginning. Grid could make a better production item than a dropped item the reflected three times the damage. From the moment he heard about Zhang Zheng's armor from Bubat, he predicted there would be a deadly problem with Zhang Zheng's armor.

*Peeeeeeong!*

Finally, the Black King's Armor exploded and Zhang Zheng drank a potion. Then the same thing repeated.

*Peeeeeeong!*

It was the fifth explosion of the Black King's Armor. Zhang Zheng once again drank a potion. Then he noticed a wicked smile spreading on Grid's face.

'Is this bastard smiling...? Eh?'

Zhang Zheng was taken aback when he witnessed Grid's face. He belatedly realized that he overlooked one fact because he was completely lost in the humiliation he felt for the first time in his life.

'...The armor's durability!'

A chill went down Zhang Zheng's spine. The Black King's Armor, it exploded five times? Then 250 durability had been lost. If it exploded one more time...!

*Peok! Peok peok!*

"N-No...!"

[You have suffered 1,600 damage.]

[You have suffered 930...]

[You have suffered 965...]

Zhang Zheng became panicked as the Mjolnir bombardment started again.

"Stop! Please! Please stoppppp!"

The crowd murmured as Zhang Zheng's desperate screams rang out through Tokyo Dome. The nasty Zhang Zheng was crying and begging as a child. Then Grid...

"What if I don't want to?"

He didn't stop. Zhang Zheng was wicked. Considering his personality, Grid didn't know what he would do if Zhang Zheng wasn't trampled on. Grid knew it for sure because he had met many enemies in his life. Zhang Zheng wasn't someone he should show mercy to.

"Today is your memorial day."

"You...!"

Zhang Zheng was unable to swap items in the infinite stiffness state! Zhang Zheng fell into despair at the worst situation when a notification window rose.

[30,000 damage has accumulated. The Black King's Armor feels humiliated!]

*Peeeeeeong!*

[The Black King's Armor has completely lost its durability. The Black King's Armor is permanently destroyed.]

"N-No! Nooooooooo!!"

Zhang Zheng screamed.

*Puok!*

Iyarugt dealt the final blow. Zhang Zheng was finally released from hell.

◊ ◊ ◊

"The winner is Grid!!"

The same time that the host called out.

"You...! How dare you!"

Zhang Zheng rushed towards Grid the moment he logged out and exited the capsule.

He completely lost his temper and forgot that this was the National Competition. His actions were being broadcasted around the world.

"I will kill you!"

Zhang Zheng roared like a dog with rabies and swung his fist. It was a fist that accurately aimed for Grid's face as he left the capsule late. Grid was caught off guard. The crowd cried out as they expected Grid to be hit. But surprisingly, Grid didn't allow the attack. He instinctively used footwork to avoid Zhang Zheng's fist. Then he kicked out, knocking Zhang Zheng down. It was a counterattack that took full advantage of the natural body movements from playing Satisfy, a body that had been constantly exercising and the Taekwondo taught during military service.

"...!!"

The security guards running on stage were stunned when they witnessed what happened to Zhang Zheng. They were impressed with Grid's clean movements. On the other hand, Grid was baffled.

'Wow, what a terrible fighter.'

Grid had been beaten up in his school days. Even a few years ago, he had been hit by the gangsters harassing Sehee and Yerim and ended up being protected by Yerim. Being protected by a high school girl...

Grid was forced to think he was weak. He believed that he was someone who couldn't fight in reality. Yet Zhang Zheng's fist seemed to be in slow motion.

'There are people who are worse at fighting than me...'

Grid looked at Zhang Zheng, who had collapsed from his weak kick, and was filled with sympathy. Grid didn't know. Zhang Zheng was actually a martial artist in China.

The viewers cheered.

"Waaahhhhhh!"

"Grid properly gave a scolding to that nasty Chinese player!"

"How can he fight so well? What can't he do?"

"He's the real deal...!"

"Grid! Grid!! Grid!!!"

The atmosphere rose. The Grid who exited on the cheers was the main character of the world itself. On the other hand, Zhang Zheng was greatly disciplined for his constant cursing and violence. His account was suspended from Satisfy for four months and he wouldn't be able to participate in the next two National Competitions.

China's new star fell as soon as he rose. All of China had a mournful atmosphere. But surprisingly, few Chinese people blamed Grid. This incident was caused by Zhang Zheng himself and they thought he deserved it.

At the same time, the Korean team's waiting room.

"...Doesn't Grid fight better than me?"

Toon was afraid of losing his job as Grid's bodyguard.

◇ ◇ ◇

The 3rd National Competition's PvP event seemed like a stage designed for Grid and Kraugel. They rose from the round of 32 to the finals.

Grid used his overwhelming attack power to blow away the enemies while Kraugel used his control to take down the enemies. If Grid managed to defeat his opponent without even touching them, Kraugel also took control of his sword to defeat the opponent with folded arms.

Strangely, not one member of Overgeared participated in this year's PvP, making it a competition between Grid and Kraugel. In the course of four matches, Grid and Kraugel won easily without a single crisis. The crowd was overwhelmed by their unrivaled strength.

"Isn't Grid several times stronger than he was last year?"

"Is Grid the reason why the Overgeared members didn't participate in PvP? They knew they would obviously lose against Grid and gave up."

"It's a realistic interpretation. I have the same idea."

"But Kraugel is also much stronger. He won't be pushed by Grid."

"That's right. In particular, the Control Sword technique is a big hit. He can move the sword without using his hands. This year's Kraugel has a perfect defense for the God Hands."

"Who will win?"

Nobody could predict the winner. Even the experts didn't disclose their opinions. Did they deserve to be paid for the show if they stayed silent on air? There were many protests from viewers. The experts, who gradually lost their place due to Grid, were no different from being unemployed.

# Chapter 767

Due to their overwhelming presence, Grid and Kraugel went straight to the finals. They shared the same thoughts 30 minutes before the match.

'Can I win?'

'I must win.'

'If not this year-'

"There might not be a chance to win anymore."

The two men saw each other's skills during the last National Competition. They acknowledged each other and were afraid. They had both expectations and concerns about the potential that was hard to quantify of the other person.

*Duguen, duguen, dugeun...*

The Korean team's waiting room.

Grid sat on the sofa, his heart beating much faster than usual. He thought of the first day he met Kraugel. He was reminded of the emotions he felt when facing the sky above the sky, who wasn't easy to see.

'...Good.'

How could he explain this deep emotion? Grid changed due to his meeting with Kraugel. He became known world wide, knew his potential strength, and gained confidence. In addition, he was able to run towards the goal of 'Kraugel.'

'If I hadn't met you at that time, I wouldn't have grown to where I am now.' Yes, for Grid, Kraugel was a special person. Sometimes he felt like a benefactor. 'He's the benefactor who shared the information of the Behen Archipelago with me.'

Grid smiled and rose from the sofa.

"Kraugel, you have an obligation to see my growth."

Victory. Fight and win at all cost. Grid was filled with strong desire.

Now he realized. In the future, he wouldn't be the one chasing after another player. He would be the one going ahead. Grid had to evolve, for the young players of South Korea and the players of the Overgeared Kingdom. It would be done by breaking the sky called Kraugel.

"The role that you have been taking so far... I'll do it for you in the future.'

*Kkuok.*

Grid raised trembling hands to his grim face.

◊ ◊ ◊

The other Korean representatives were afraid of interrupting Grid's thoughts and waited outside the room.

"Who will win?"

Viola wasn't affected by the atmosphere and questioned. Then.

"Of course it will be God Grid." Peak Sword didn't hesitate for a moment before replying.

"..."

The other players couldn't easily guess and remained silent. The rematch between Grid and Kraugel that took place after one year and three months.

It didn't just involve the pride between the two, but the destiny of South Korea and the United States. The first place in the overall rankings would be decided by who won the match. The citizens of the first ranked country could secure a large experience buff.

From the standpoint of the Korean players, they were praying for Grid's victory. The problem was that the opponent was the sky above the sky. The man who had reigned since Satisfy opened. No matter how strong Grid was, it was hard to be sure if he could beat Kraugel.

"We will find out at the end of the day." Eat Spicy Jokbal said. "It's true that Sword Saint Kraugel's power can't be measured, but Grid hasn't revealed all his power yet either. We don't know who will win."

The fact that the Sword Saint was the strongest combat class was hard to deny. But Grid had items and a higher level than Kraugel.

"...Well, I will personally cheer for Grid."

It wasn't just because Eat Spicy Jokbal coveted the buff. What if Grid who defeated him lost to Kraugel?

'I will also be under Kraugel. Damn!'

He didn't want to be below another person!

Peak Sword laughed without knowing why Eat Spicy Jokbal was going crazy. "You're hoping for Grid's victory? Friend Jokbal! You have finally fallen for the charms of God Grid!"

"What bullshit...! I just want the buff!"

There were 20 minutes until the finals started.

◇ ◇ ◇

The US team's waiting room.

"..."

Kraugel sat with his eyes closed.

He thought of the first time he encountered the mad Agnus. The first and last day he met with Haster, who had no interest in the world. The day he first met Grid, who had flames in his black eyes. Among the people who the S.A. Group called the 'Five Miracles,' Grid was the one who made Kraugel's heart boil. It was just after fighting Piaro. However, Grid was still the first player to defeat him.

'From then on.'

Kraugel's gaze and awareness always followed Grid. Every time he saw Grid go one step further, Kraugel became more motivated and was able to grow faster. Kraugel realized. If Grid hadn't been here. Kraugel might not have been left behind, but he would've become empty from the curse called nothingness.

'Since then, I have been happy.'

There was a smile on Kraugel's face as he opened his eyes. The moment he stood up.

"Player Kraugel, it's 15 minutes until the start of the match. Please move to the stage."

The voice of the staff could be heard outside the waiting room.

Lael saw him and said, "Good luck."

Lael didn't want Kraugel to win. He naturally wanted Grid to win. As Grid's subordinate, he eagerly prayed. But Kraugel was the peak of two billion users and an idol to billions of people. It would become complicated if Kraugel fell. Kraugel read Lael's bittersweet facial expression and replied with his distinct expressionless face.

"The other person is Grid. If I lose to him, his existence can no longer be denied."

The fact that Grid deserved to bring down the sky, now everyone in the world knew this. No one would be disappointed or criticize Kraugel if he lost.

"Of course, I don't intend to lose."

Victory. He would also win this time. Kraugel was filled with a strong desire. He hoped that he would always be Grid's goal. He wanted Grid to keep being conscious of him. There was nothing as sad as one-sided liking.

◊ ◊ ◊

"Crying Tiger."

*Peeeeeeong!*

The PvP finals video of the 2nd National Competition was being played on the screen. Kraugel penetrated the shield summoned by the white-haired Grid, while being burned by flames at the same time. The winner was decided with a mere 0.1 seconds

difference, touching the hearts of the crowd and viewers.

“Ahh...”

“It’s cool to see that scene again a few times.”

It was a video recording that had 5 billion playbacks in a year. Of the 8 billion people, the only ones who hadn’t seen the confrontation between Grid and Kraugel were babies. In addition, people didn’t play the video once. Growing children, young people aggressively planning for their future, middle-aged people getting tired of their lives, and old people in the twilight of their lives.

All of them came up with new dreams and desires by repeating the video of the confrontation between Grid and Kraugel. They lived a faithful life, hoping to stand on the same stage someday.

The players who became idols. Grid and Kraugel entered the stage.

〔The protagonists of the confrontation that occurred one year and three months ago! Kraugel of the United States and Grid of South Korea are on the stage!!〕

〔Hey! The cheers were amazing! I have never seen such a sight in 15 years. Won’t Tokyo Dome collapse if it continues like this?〕

〔Hahaha! At this moment, everyone seems united, regardless of nationality, race, gender, or religion. We can see how great the two players are.〕

〔Nobody cares that this match will determine who will be first on the overall rankings. Everyone in the crowd is just passionate about both players.〕

“Grid!! You’re the first legend! You’re the first king! Prove that you’re the best!”

“Kraugel! Don’t fall! Show Grid why you have reigned at the top for so many years!”

“Grid!”

“Kraugel!”

“Waaahhhhhh!”

The piercing shouts spread throughout Tokyo. The excitement of the scene was being transmitted to viewers. But Grid and Kraugel were in the middle of a tranquil world. The two men faced other other and were solely focused on the other person. The cries of other people didn't reach their ears.

"A man's match should be decided in three rounds?"

"Yes."

"Then this time is the real winner?"

"That's right."

"We will still be friends regardless of the result?"

"Of course."

"Then I will beat you."

"I will also do my best."

The two men lightly greeted each other before standing in front of their capsules. The host hurriedly handed a microphone to Kraugel.

"Could you please tell us your feelings ahead of the match?"

"..."

The moment Kraugel was given the microphone. The heated up Tokyo Dome fell silent. Tens of thousands of people in Tokyo Dome gazed at one person. Their faces were filled with anticipation as Kraugel opened his mouth.

"I'm afraid."

"...Huh?"

The sky above the sky was afraid? The host and spectators doubted their ears.

"That's why I am looking forward to it even more."

Kraugel smiled at the end of his words. The always emotionless Kraugel was smiling so brightly?

"Ahh..."

The people who saw Kraugel realized it for the first time. The person who had been waiting for this moment more than anyone else was Kraugel.

"Kyaaaaak! Kraugel!"

"Yes, enjoy it! Kraugel, win!"

"Kraugel! Kraugel! Kraugel!"

"Waaaaahhhh!"

The atmosphere reached the peak.

At the same time, in Satisfy.

"We will soon move."

Veradin led the elites of Immortal into Reinhardt, capital of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was easy to infiltrate, since the Overgeared Kingdom freely allowed players to access the city.

"Head straight for the smithy."

"Yes!"

Not only did Grid show an overwhelming performance in the National Competition, he also succeeded in getting the first ranked blacksmith, Panmir. In such a situation, Immortal was forced to feel a sense of crisis since they were hostile to Grid. It was hard to overlook the Overgeared Kingdom.

So.

"The target is Blacksmith Khan. Find him and kill him."

Immortal acted first. Most members of Overgeared were logged out now that the PvP

finals had begun. Reinhardt was an empty house.

◊ ◊ ◊

“The stars are bright.”

His hammering would give strength to Grid. Khan worked hard again today with such an attitude. His eyes in his wrinkled face were filled with longing as he looked up at the night sky. Today, he wanted to see Grid more and more.

# Chapter 768

The US team's waiting room.

Panmir was sitting next to Lauel and chattering away. He looked like a young child placed in front of a birthday cake. He was excited about the new life he would live as an Overgeared member after finishing the National Competition.

"Is there a blacksmith craftsman in the Overgeared Kingdom?"

"Yes. There are a total of five."

The blacksmiths who came from Pangea on the East Continent and Khan. All of them were taught by Grid and became craftsmen through enlightenment. In particular, Khan's craftsmanship level was high. Lauel dared to boast that Khan was in the top 10 of the continent.

"Blacksmith Khan...? I've heard that name before. I remember that he was praised as the best blacksmith 20 years ago, until he retired after losing his son."

"Yes, that's right."

"Huhu, he didn't actually retire, but followed Grid. Khan reached the craftsman rank thanks to Grid. It's no different from Grid being his benefactor."

Grid had nurtured talent from a long time ago. It was truly amazing. Lauel spoke meaningfully towards Panmir, who admired this new fact. "Benefactor... But Khan might be King Grid's benefactor."

"Hmm?"

"Haha, it's nothing."

In terms of Khan's superior blacksmithing skills, it was mostly from an NPC point of view. In fact, he was Grid's first friend, teacher, student, and also a family member. Who would understand?

Grid was on the monitors. Lauel watched him standing in the center of the world with unwavering eyes and showed a gentle smile.

◊ ◊ ◊

"..."

"..."

A castle enveloped in the darkness of night. The Lion's Castle, the stage of PvP every year was very large. There were four spires, seven floors, and corridors with hundreds of rooms. But in the end, it became a ruin. It might've boasted a brilliant civilization and beauty in the past, but now it was just a ruin where desolate wind blew.

*Chichik, chijijk.*

The hundreds of pillars supporting the roof were in such a precarious state that there were doubts about whether they could collapse straight away. The stone powder falling on the ground was a signal. The extremely concentrated Grid and Kraugel in the middle of the square with a fountain moved at the same time.

*Chaeeng!*

The sword where darkness was encroaching. There was no trace of it as Kraugel's +9 White Fang shot towards Grid.

[A complete evasion has failed. You have suffered 1,290 damage.]

[The durability of Triple Layers has decreased by 1.]

*Kwajajajak!*

A sword split apart the darkness. Like the claws of a bird of prey, the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires smashed the old fountain.

"Che!"

This attack could easily be avoided despite Grid being equipped with Alex's Quick

Gloves? Grid was amazed by Kraugel's movements, who took full advantage of the passive Super Sensitivity and his innate abilities as he rotated and retrieved his sword.

Then.

*Peeeeeeong!*

Grid's Enlightenment Sword blocked Kraugel's White Fang that appeared behind Grid's back.

[You have blocked a powerful blow!]

[Your hands are temporarily paralyzed.]

[You have resisted.]

[The durability of the +9 White Fang has decreased by 2.]

“Kuk...!”

Grid's attack power with his new sword exceeded Kraugel's assumed range. Only their swords clashed but the weight of the sword was so great that Kraugel moaned.

“How is it?” Grid was able to grasp and react relatively quickly to Kraugel's movements thanks to the Slaughterer's Eye Patch and his high insight stat. “Have I become stronger?”

“The best.”

“Hat...!”

Kraugel's confirmation made Grid flourish. Grid felt his heart beat faster as he advanced forward. He tried to use footwork while pushing Kraugel's White Fang with his Enlightenment Sword.

At that moment.

“Crushing Sword.”

Kraugel used a unique sword breaking type skill.

*Hwiririk!*

The Enlightenment Sword intertwined with White Fang was rotated by White Fang. Naturally, Grid's wrist also turned.

*Kwajajajak!*

An eerie sound was heard. A chill went down Grid's spine.

[Your wrist has been broken.]

[You have fallen into the 'fracture'd state.]

[Your attack speed is reduced by 50% for 20 seconds and damage is reduced by 30%.]

[The current durability of the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires has decreased by 12%.]

'Crazy!'

It caused a physical condition that couldn't be resisted while drastically reducing the durability of the weapon? Grid reminded himself. Kraugel was able to become a Sword Saint by mastering the sword. The person who the world viewed as strongest in Satisfy right now was Kraugel!

*Seokeok!*

*Pa pa pa pat!*

[You have suffered 4,700 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,950 damage.]

[You have suffered 4,230...]

[You have suffered 4,110...]

The moment he allowed an attack. The Slaughterer's Eye Patch and his insight didn't detect that constant slashes that struck Grid's body. The minimum damage compensation when a 'sword type weapon was equipped' in proportion to defense and the ability of a Sword Saint to deal additional damage to all species made the defense of Triple Layers futile.

"God Hands!"

The flow wasn't good. Grid determined that it was necessary to reset the situation. He shouted and the four God Hands appeared behind him. Under the clear moonlight that shone in the darkness, a glittering gold light appeared. But the gold was soon lifted.

It was because four swords were fired from Kraugel's inventory and the God Hands were blown away. It was the Control Sword skill. A Sword Saint was able to remotely control up to 10 swords. An ordinary person wouldn't be able to control their body and the swords at the same time.

*Sururuk.*

But it was possible for Kraugel, the sky above the sky. He controlled the swords while using White Light Steps. He reached Grid's side while hiding in the moonlight.

'Ick...!'

Grid realized Kraugel's approach and belatedly swung his sword.

*Supaak!*

He was hampered by his fractured state. Kraugel had the effect of reaching the maximum speed 'when a sword type weapon was equipped' and he was much faster than Grid's sword.

[You have suffered 4,900 damage.]

"Cough!"

Grid coughed up blood as he was cut on the side. Kraugel moved forward the moment he attacked, capturing Grid's rear area. There was a perfect gap behind Grid.

*Clink!*

Kraugel bent forward and took a stance. It was the forerunner to the sword that cut the world, Space Sword.

*Sakak-!*

As soon as White Fang emitted a black light, the ground, darkness and the moonlight...

*Jjejeok! Jjejejejeok!*

They were split in half at the same time. However, the target Grid received no damage. It was thanks to the use of Freely Move, which avoided all non-targeted skills. Even the glorious Sword Saint found it hard to harm the Secret Hero who saved the world.

*Kwajak!*

Rising and descending. With a simple action, Grid slipped away from the range of Space Sword and struck Kraugel's body.

[You have suffered 9,490 damage.]

"...!"

Didn't he have a passive that reduced maximum damage done by a sword type weapon by 40%? This question rose in Kraugel's eyes as he received big damage. The biggest problem was that Grid's attack didn't end with just the primary damage. Up to three extra damages were possible.

*Kuwaaaaaaang!*

The black flames inflicted 300% damage.

〔Ah....!〕

The commentators of broadcasting companies around the world cried out. This was the strongest immediate skill that destroyed Tarma, one of the PvP winning candidates. Some commentators predicted Kraugel's death.

〔P-Player Kraugel! Surely he won't be logged out like this?〕

The legendary class had an immortal passive. The people of the world were now clearly aware of this fact based on various circumstances. Of course, the commentators were the same. The commentators were well aware that Kraugel wouldn't die from this blow. But they had to make a more dramatic commentary, sweeping the audience and viewers into an extremely nervous atmosphere.

In particular, those who cheered on Kraugel were watching the remnants of the black flames with worry. They didn't want the sky above the sky that they had admired for so many years to fall like this.

At that moment.

*Chwaruruk!*

A shield of light blocked the black flames. The black flames sweeping the Lion's Castle vanished without a trace. It was the defensive skill of a Sword Saint, 'Sword Curtain' that used sword energy as a resource. The skill created a protective curtain made of dozens of swords and had the ability to block all magical and physical damage.

“...Wow.”

Grid sweated as he looked at Kraugel. So far, he had dealt with various competitors. Perhaps they had the same thoughts every time they faced him?

“Isn't this a scam?”

Grid spoke what he was thinking. The strongest legendary class, Sword Saint. He was revealing a grand majesty when dealing with the Overgeared King. In addition.

〔You have discovered a strong person of this era!〕

〔The Hero King's fighting energy has started to boil!〕

Grid was also complete. Grid's fighting energy, which had been kept at 10 thanks to Kraugel's low level, slowly started to rise. It was a hidden effect created by the Sword Saint class.

*Kuooooh!*

It didn't matter if it was real or not. People murmured as the fighting energy appeared like a haze around Grid's body.

"What's this?"

"Wow, it's cool."

The crowd and viewers started to notice one by one. A red and purple aura was wrapped around Grid's body. It was the mighty power of the Undefeated King, whose existence itself was a legend. Grid inherited his will and was now exposing it to the world.

*Duguen!*

Kraugel sensed it. This year's showdown would be much tougher than last year.

# Chapter 769

‘From now on, it is the real thing.’

*Kuoooooh!*

The red and purple aura around Grid. Kraugel knew what it was. Sword Saint Muller was also the Hero King.

‘Fighting energy...’

Just like Grid learned about Pagma, Kraugel learned about the former Sword Saint Muller. He had a variety of Muller episodes that ordinary people didn’t know. He couldn’t be ignorant about fighting energy.

“The power of a hero of heroes.”

Muller was said to become complete by combining fighting energy and sword energy. From the time Grid was named the Hero King, Kraugel could no longer follow Muller. Kraugel would’ve felt desperate if he had been pursuing Muller’s shadow. But Kraugel was pioneering his own way. There was no reason to be obsessed with the title of Hero King because he didn’t follow Muller. When Grid became the Hero King, Kraugel could congratulate him in a pure manner.

*Clink!*

It would be a tough fight that couldn’t compare to last year. Kraugel’s expression calmed down as he faced Grid’s fighting energy. But it was just a superficial appearance. His hands holding White Fang were filled with cold sweat. A tension comparable to the time when he faced Great Demon Drasion filled him. It meant that Grid’s presence was equal to or greater than a weakened great demon.

“From now on, it will be different!”

The exited Grid ran over to him. He was faster and stronger thanks to his rising fighting energy.

*Jeeeeeeong!*

"Kuk...!"

Grid's sword descended at the fastest speed! Kraugel gritted his teeth and defended. The weight behind Grid's attack was like a great mountain. Kraugel's body and mind were driven to the extreme.

*Jaaeng! Jjejeong! Jjeejeeeong!*

Every time he hit Kraugel's sword, Grid's fighting energy rose and his attack speed increased. A relentless black and red light pressed Kraugel from all directions, causing Kraugel to take several steps back.

Finally.

*Tak!*

Kraugel's back ended up against an old pillar. Grid was already in the process of moving forward with his footwork.

"Pinnacle!"

It was one of the basic skills of Pagma's Swordsmanship. The powerful skill that disregarded a certain amount of defense fell like a lightning bolt. Suddenly, a question popped into Kraugel's brain. Wasn't Pinnacle a technique that Kraugel had counterattacked twice in the past already? Every time Grid used Pinnacle, he was hit back with Tearing the Sky the sky and suffered great damage. He wouldn't have forgotten this fact.

'Is he trying to do something else separately?'

Kraugel's intuition told him not to use Tearing the Sky. As Grid's sword descended, Kraugel used Sword Curtain to defend.

Then.

'Che!'

Grid, who was preparing to use Revolve, clicked his tongue. That's right. Grid intended

to return the counter to Pinnacle, Tearing the Sky back to Kraugel using Revolve. But it was all for naught.

*Jjejeong! Jjejejeok!*

*Kuwaaaaaang!*

The collision of Pinnacle with the Sword Curtain produced a powerful shock wave. Of course, the pillar Kraugel was backed up against as well as the ones 3m to his left and right were swept away by the shock wave. The moment a corner of the castle collapsed.

*Kurururung!*

The collapsing roof and rising dust hid Grid and Kraugel. The commentators and viewers looked around in order to find traces of the two.

*Kuuong!*

Grid flew out from the smoke. A jump! He immediately raised his body and used magic.

“Magic Detection!”

[Magic Detection (Enhanced) has been used.]

*Paaaat!*

Mana was released from Grid’s body and scanned around him.

Name: Kraugel

Level: ???

Class: ???

Stats: ???

Race: Human

Status: Player

Since reaching level three on the East Continent, Magic Detection (Enhanced) displayed a small part of the target's information as well as informing Grid of Kraugel's location. It was right in front of him.

*Chaeeng!*

Grid hurriedly swung his sword and it was stopped by the empty air in front of him.

*Sururuk.*

A full moon was floating above the high spires. Kraugel, who had hidden himself in the moonlight with White Light Steps, was revealed. His breathing was rough as he blocked Grid's sword. The commentators, spectators and viewers who saw this series of processes were disturbed.

〔Kraugel's condition is strange...?〕

〔Is that right?〕

Kraugel was different from Grid. He neutralized his targets with pure control rather than overwhelming them with physical stats, skills, or items. Yet his control skills weren't highlighted when fighting Grid. Throughout the battle, he seemed to rely solely on skills like Grid.

People started to speculate.

"Is Kraugel's control less than what it was?"

"Or maybe Grid's control is a match for Kraugel...?"

"In any case, the situation is different from the past."

The reason people envied Kraugel was because of his control. If only they could move as well as him. If only they could make the same cool judgment in that situation. How many rankers could follow even half of Kraugel? People always thought like this.

But they didn't think this when they saw the current Kraugel. Kraugel seemed to be worse than usual in the confrontation with Grid.

'Is it the aftermath of becoming a Sword Saint?'

A legendary class. Obviously, the Sword Saint was the one with the best power among them. An example was the Space Sword that split apart the world. Perhaps Kraugel had become obsessed with the power of these skills and forgot his own strength? Did his control decline because he became dependent on skills?

People who thought like this couldn't even imagine. In fact, Kraugel was currently controlling four swords against the God Hands. It was in order to block Grid's strength with the God Hands, which was much more proficient than last year. Kraugel was forced to disperse attention to the four swords, meaning he lacked delicacy when dealing with Grid. But people didn't know the principles of Control Sword and couldn't understand Kraugel's position.

On the other hand.

'Is it hard?'

Grid faintly guessed the situation Kraugel was in. It was natural. A delicate command system was needed in order to make high-quality movements with the God Hands, even for Pagma's Descendant. It was Grid's conjecture that Kraugel's Control Sword would be just as hard and his thoughts were correct. Kraugel's mental power was consumed twice as fast after using Control Sword.

'God Hands! Continue to attack Kraugel! Don't rest!'

Grid maximized the benefits of the God Hands. He took full advantage of the ego items that could act on their own. It was the majesty of the legendary class exclusive item that Kraugel hadn't acquired yet.

*Peng! Pepepepeng!*

The God Hands set Kraugel as the target and started to launch Magic Missiles. The four swords were interfering with Mjolnir. Then Grid would rather abandon Mjolnir and have them support him from a distance.

*Syuok! Syuok!*

Kraugel moved in a zigzag to avoid Magic Missiles. Grid attacked the gaps that occurred at this time. Kraugel who was trying to defend himself with Super Sensitivity, stopped trying to fight back. Then a new Grid appeared behind him. It was Doppelganger Randy. It was the first time Grid summoned his pets in his three confrontations with Kraugel. It was the influence of Battlefield. Now Grid had become aware. Pets were also his skills. He realized it was wasteful to refrain from using pets in the name of fair play.

“Kill!”

At the same time, Randy was able to reproduce his master’s skill.

“Tearing the Sky.”

*Kwajak! Kwajajak!*

As soon as Randy appeared, he was hit by Kraugel’s counterattack and died. One of the two pets that Grid had relied on for many years vanished. But Grid wasn’t upset.

“Sorry...!” He apologizing to the grey Randy. “It was good enough!”

Grid sent encouragement.

“Pinnacle Kill!”

Then he finally completed the footwork of his fusion skill. It was something he had been unable to do through the battle due to being blocked by Kraugel. If it wasn’t for Randy pulling Kraugel’s gaze away, Grid would’ve never been able to complete it.

*Kuooooh!*

The ultimate slash containing killing intent. It was soon linked with a stab. The skill that Grid had trained in the process of dealing with his clone on the Behen Archipelago was devastating to the target since it ignored defense. It was the second most powerful skill in Pagma’s Swordsmanship.

It was a skill that Kraugel’s counterattack, Tearing the Sky couldn’t cope with. Last year, Kraugel had used Jajinmori, which instantly activated in close ranges, to block it.

“Too late...!”

This year's Kraugel had fallen for the bait that was Randy. Kraugel's reaction to Pinnacle Kill was too late.

*Sakak-!*

The black and red sword fell in a straight line towards Kraugel.

*Puok!*

Then it was followed by a stab. The strongest skill that exerted a powerful force. It put a heavy burden on the user's muscles and had a risk of causing the user to lose 4,500 health.

[You have dealt 69,300 damage to the target!]

What did 4,500 health matter compared to dealing a critical wound to Kraugel? Grid smiled with satisfaction.

*Snap!*

Kraugel took out a gold peach and bit it. It was the ultimate health recovery item that Kraugel gained in exchange for being Pangea's Little Hero. The gold peach restored the user's health to the maximum. Grid ignored the various PvP rules intended to create a 'grand spectacle.' It was Kraugel who positively utilized the newly applied 'potions can be taken' PvP rule.

"What...?"

Grid was confused when Kraugel's health was restored to the maximum.

Kraugel pushed away from Grid using Jajinmori, then used one of the unique endgame skills of a Sword Saint, 'Condemnation Sword.' Unlike the wide-range Space Sword, this skill aimed at a single target and its power transcended Space Sword. It was the beginning of a full-scale counterattack.

By using Space Sword in the beginning, Kraugel deliberately had Grid consume Freely Move. He was in a position to win. Even if it was only a 1% chance, Kraugel hoped. He wished to be Grid's goal for one more year and sincerely swung the Condemnation

Sword.

But there was a saying that the heavens didn't love short-lived geniuses. Brilliant talent came with a lethal curse.

[The True White Fang is resonating!]

[The curse 'Bunhelier's Gaze' is activated!]

[Retreat!]

[Bunhelier's Gaze]

The evil dragon Bunhelier is always watching over you.

You might be attacked on the day when Bunhelier is feeling grumpy.

Skill Activation Condition: Random

It was the curse attached to White Fang. It had never activated before and now it was activated in a match that Kraugel had dreamt about for the past year.

*Kurwarwarwarwa!*

With a roar that shook the earth, a huge shadow that erased the moon appeared.

"Avoid it!"

Kraugel stopped using Condemnation Sword and urgently shouted towards Grid. The worst situation was triggered due to the probability system. There was no time to blame anyone. Kraugel just didn't want to ruin the situation. He couldn't overlook the consequences of what would happen if Grid was trampled on by a dragon while the whole world was watching. He had to bear responsibility for the current situation.

"Freely Move!"

The condition to acquire this title was to 'raid' three named bosses higher in level

'alone.' It wasn't Grid's exclusive skill. It was one step behind Grid but Kraugel also obtained the title this year. Due to this, he could use Freely Move.

*Supaak!*

Kraugel escaped from Bunhelier's breath, ascended the grey scales and reached its huge head. His black eyes flashed under black hair as he faced the dragon, while the world watched agape. There were only two people in the world who understood the present situation. The people who knew the options of White Fang. One of them was Grid.

"Damn lizard...!"

Appearing at this timing to obstruct the match?

*Kwaduduk!* A distinctively purple fighting energy rose from Grid's body. His gaze was only following Bunhelier. He ignored Kraugel.

Then.

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword."

The power of the Undefeated King was revealed to the public.

# Chapter 769.5

“What the hell is this?”

The National Competition Operations Team in the S.A. Group was in a state of emergency.

The National Competition’s server was operated separately from Satisfy’s server. It was impossible for a dragon that existed in Satisfy to appear in the National Competition. However, a dragon appeared in the most important closing event. It was a situation they couldn’t understand and it was serious.

“Figure out what’s going on right now!”

“Yes!”

After receiving the orders of the team leader, the employees started to investigate all variables. The National Competition Operations Team was composed of the elites of the S.A. Group. Thus, reports immediately poured in.

“Bunhelier has disappeared from this server!”

“What...? Then that’s the body?”

“No, how did this happen?”

“I’ve found the cause! It’s the weapon used by Kraugel. The +9 White Fang has an option to summon Bunhelier.”

“What?”

The National Competition’s server was separate from Satisfy’s server. However, the data of the players brought into the National Competition’s server was the same. The option of ‘summoning Helier’ was present in the imported data. It wasn’t impossible to exclude the summoning probability from the National Competition’s server.

“This is crazy! A user has an item that summons a dragon?”

"It's a drop item from the 'Weakened Great Demon Drasion' that Kraugel raided alone!"

According to the information that came up on the central monitor, White Fang was originally an item with its real power and function sealed. Yet Kraugel had completely released the seal on the item. That's why the Bunhelier's curse option was opened.

"How did he break the seal of a legendary grade weapon? Did he proceed with the hidden quest?"

"There's no history of the quest being unlocked."

"The greatest probability is that it was due to the involvement of Pagma's Descendant Grid..."

"Again...! It's Grid once again!"

The head of the National Competition Operations Team was Mr. Nicol Cage, the server audit director of the S.A. Group. He was responsible for preventing errors and bugs from appearing in the server in real time. Therefore, Grid's existence was very troublesome for him. Every time Grid created a variable that was beyond a player's category, he would have to work overtime.

Now it was the National Competition... what was this mess?

"That nasty child!"

*Kwang!*

Nicol Cage couldn't control his boiling rage and hit the table. His face was green and he was gritting his teeth.

"This situation is very interesting.

"Chairman...!"

An elder gentleman had entered the office of the operations team. He was the father of Supercomputer Morpheus and the creator of Satisfy. The founder and chairman of the S.A. Group, Lim Cheolho. After a simple greeting and encouraging the employees to go back to work, he sat down in front of Nicol Cage.

"I-I'm sorry."

This incident wasn't Nicol Cage's fault. It was the fault of the management team responsible for verifying the data of the players. But he still apologized. Nicol Cage was the head of the National Competition Operations Team. He didn't give any excuses and apologized for ruining the closing ceremony.

Lim Cheolho grinned at him.

"I don't think this is a situation where you need to apologize."

"...?"

Nicol Cage was confused. This situation had ruined the closing ceremony. He couldn't understand how Chairman Lim Cheolho could be so relaxed right now.

Chairman Lim Cheolho said, "Hasn't the water already been spilt? There's something else that should be noted."

"What is it?"

"Did you know what Bunhelier just woke up from his seal?"

There was a village called Trempet. It was a village where the descendants of the Taylor Kingdom, that was destroyed by the Saharan Empire, lived. There was a verse in the folk song of the locals, stating that 'Evil dragon, a hero sealed it 500 years ago.'

The evil dragon was Bunhelier. The players who visited Trempet would know that Bunhelier was sealed. The S.A. Group executives who knew the world view of Satisfy knew that Bunhelier's seal had recently been released.

"The evil dragon Bunhelier is one of the reasons for Nevartan going crazy. Once he sensed the unlocking of Bunhelier's seal, the insane Nevartan regained his mind for a moment."

From here, an episode that would transform Satisfy's world view would proceed.

In order to get revenge on Bunhelier, Nevartan would travel all over the world and reunite in the Saharan Empire of the West Continent. The West Continent would become a global stage. The two dragons would have a long battle that would last for

several months. As a result, most of the West Continent would be destroyed. The number of humans who controlled the West Continent was destined to greatly decrease.

"The species that will replace humanity will appear on the continent and either fight or ally with players."

Yet Bunhelier disappeared from the server at this time.

"Nevartan can't sense Bunhelier's energy and can't maintain the lease on his reason. He's become insane again and hidden somewhere. The originally scheduled battle between the two dragons has been cancelled."

"In other words..."

"Grid and Kraugel have caused the planned disaster and transformation to disappear."

"I-Isn't this a big deal?"

Two players twisted the world view of the game that billions of people were playing. It was a serious problem. It must be restored. These were Nicol Cage's thoughts. However, Chairman Lim Cheolho thought the opposite.

"No, it can't be reversed. Have you forgotten that our policy is to absolutely not intervene in Satisfy?"

The management team shouldn't intervene in Satisfy. The reason for this rule was to avoid losing the 'another reality' setting of Satisfy. If the management team intervened in the flow of Satisfy and its users, could it really be called another reality?

In Satisfy, users must be guaranteed the same degree of freedom as reality. The moment that the company intervened, the users might become aware of the fact that Satisfy was a game and lose their immersion. It would violate the reason why Chairman Lim Cheolho created Satisfy.

"We can't intervene to restore the situation or the changed fate."

"But this is a special situation... No. It's nothing."

Nicol Cage objected only to shake his head. It was a basic policy that management

couldn't intervene in Satisfy and he had to follow this if he wanted to be kept by the board of directors. In addition, there was no real impact on Satisfy's development if an episode designed by Morpheus didn't proceed normally.

Morpheus' role was to encourage players to have fun in a pleasant environment. Morpheus provided new fun by inducing players to create more diverse forces, not just the current kingdom forces. This episode was intended to give players the fun of choosing different species, but the players would eventually pioneer the way themselves. Grid was the one who showed the possibility of destroying an existing kingdom and creating a new one.

'Rejecting even the fate of God (Morpheus)...'

On the monitor, Grid and Kraugel were facing a giant grey dragon. Lim Cheolho's eyes were very fond every time he looked at the miraculous beings who defied Morpheus' predictions. Chairman Lim Cheolho thought they were similar to himself and the employees who broke all expectations and built a virtual reality world.

"Now it's time to reveal Bunhelier's information."

"Huh? Reveal it to the public?"

"Yes. We'll make the appearance of the dragon an event."

A dragon was a godlike presence in Satisfy. The majority of players might never encounter a dragon. According to the information collected by Morpheus, only 17 players had ever seen a dragon from a distance.

"Wouldn't it be exciting to experience the existence of another world?"

A crisis was an opportunity. If the public perceived the appearance of the dragon as a 'special event' rather than 'ruining the competition,' it could lead to a positive result.

"But it doesn't make sense to restart the finals. People will notice that it's a mistake, not a prepared event."

"Why should it proceed again from the beginning?"

"Huh...?"

“Once Grid and Kraugel die to Bunhelier, don’t log them out and have them resurrect in Bunhelier’s nest. We’ll package their death as the process for releasing a new stage.”

The National Competition’s server was separate from Satisfy’s server, but all maps were implemented. Bunhelier’s nest was naturally included. The operations team wasn’t involved in Satisfy, but they were constantly involved in the National Competition. An example was the changes in the rules every year.

“This isn’t a problem. The appearance of Bunhelier will be finished with a dramatic directing that brings joy to the public.”

This year’s PvP finals would be more popular than ever. Nicol Cage was impressed by Chairman Lim Cheolho’s resourcefulness and creativity.

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〔D-Dragon...〕

[The evil dragon Bunhelier has appeared!]

This message appeared the moment that the sky was covered. The commentators and viewers were overwhelmed by the grandeur and were speechless. The question ‘No, why is a dragon appearing in the National Competition?’ was covered up by the presence of the dragon itself.

*Kurarararara!*

Bunhelier opened his huge mouth and shot out a breath. The momentum was like the whole sea being summoned. The range of the blue breath swept over the Lion’s Castle. It was different from a wyvern’s breath that only burned a few meters. This was a huge attack that was impossible to avoid.

*Kurururung!*

Was it true that this place existed a while ago? The Lion’s Castle disappeared so quickly that people questioned it.

“...”

The crowd and viewers all closed their mouths. A dragon. Players recognized them as

the final boss, a legendary presence that overwhelmed even the 1st Great Demon Baal. It was enough to make the silent world feel fear.

At this time.

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[A legend doesn't die easily. Your life force is fixed to a minimum. You resist all attacks for 5 seconds.]

Grid was hit by Bunhelier's breath and entered the immortal state, while Kraugel avoided the breath using Freely Move and rose to Bunhelier's head. The height was 30 meters above sea level. He avoided the non-targeted skill and flew by using the effect of Freely Move to reach the target.

“Condemnation Sword!”

*Pajik! Paijijik!*

It was the Sword Saint's ultimate attack that was originally for Grid. The +9 White Fang was surrounded by silver and struck Bunhelier.

[The information of the evil dragon Bunhelier is released.]

[Bunhelier]

Level: ?????

Species: Dragon

Strength: 99,999 Stamina: 99,999

Agility: 12,000 Intelligence: 25,000

Skills: Breath (SSSS). ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????, ?????.

A transcendent dragon. He could destroy the world if he wanted. Only a similar transcendent presence could threaten the dragon.

“What...?”

The crowd was astonished at Bunhelier’s ridiculous status window.

*Puk!*

Kraugel’s sword flew against the fierce momentum and penetrated Bunhelier. The pupil size alone was bigger than Kraugel’s body. White Fang was just like a toothpick.

Then.

[Sword Saint Kraugel has done 1 damage to Bunhelier.]

This notification window appeared on the center of the monitor.

“Ah... Ahhh...”

People realized. The sky above the sky, who they so envied, was a mere speck of dust in front of the dragon.

〔That’s the world’s strongest creature....!〕

〔Dragon... It’s more amazing than I can imagine. Perhaps it can be raided in 10 years, 20 years?〕

〔Named bosses grow with the players. It’s impossible to raid a dragon. In the first place, dragons weren’t created for players to raid.〕

The commentators were right. Dragons weren’t targets for raids. This was clearly stated in Satisfy’s default setting. The moment that everyone was in shock.

“...?”

“What?”

The camera suddenly focused on Grid. The purple fighting energy around Grid was burning.

"100,000 Army."

"...Eh?"

People thought of the 'Grid is a chuuni' video. Overgeared King Grid. He was acting like a chuuni in an emergency like this?

"Was this a joke?"

"No, what's he doing alone in this urgent situation?"

"Crazy. Crazy."

They didn't know where this joke came from. Some people criticized Grid while others thought it was ridiculous.

Then Grid.

"Massacre Sword."

The Undefeated King's power was unveiled.

*Peng!*

*Pepepepeok!*

The Enlightenment Sword was swung 30 times per second. Black red energy blades filled the air and headed towards Bunhelier.

*Kuwaaaaang!*

As soon as Grid fired the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword at Bunhelier, the following notification windows appeared.

[The target is a dragon.]

[The Hero King title effect is activated.]

[The fighting energy of the Hero King has risen to the rank of a transcendent and

[threatens the dragon. The Absolute Defense of Bunhelier is disabled.]

[You have dealt 1,500 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 1,430 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 1,610...]

[You have dealt 1,290...]

.....

.....

*Kurarararara!*

A storm of energy blades struck Bunhelier! The scratches on the dragon scales that couldn't even be damaged by the Sword Saint's ultimate attack caused massive shock to the public.

“Hiccup!”

People on the stands started hiccuping.

# Chapter 770

[You have dealt 1,430...]

[The black flame explosion...]

*Pepeng!*

*Pepepepeng!*

〔P-Player Grid is continuing the onslaught!!〕

〔Player Grid's attack power is completely overwhelming Player Kraugel!!〕

〔100,000 Army Massacre Sword...! I now understand why it has such a name! It has tremendous power!!〕

〔It's worth noting that the black flames are intermittently exploding. It's applied at the same time as other skills so it might be a passive skill... 〕

〔Huh? Is that so?〕

The sight of Bunhelier being bombarded 30 times with 100,000 Army Massacre Sword was shocking. Bunlier's scales, which completely neutralized Sword Saint Kraugel's attacks, received damage. It was the moment when the hidden skill 'Absolute Defense (SSS) was overwhelmed by Grid's dignity.

*Flinch.*

Bunhelier's 30 meter long body was finely shaking. The spectators and viewers watching wondered if Grid might succeed in raiding Bunhelier. But reality was terrible. It was like an ordinary person scratching the paint of a luxury sedan only for it to emerge unscathed. Even if slight scratches were made with human fingernails, it was just like dirt from the road blowing. It meant that the wounds on Bunhelier's scales were very minor after being hit by 100,000 Army Massacre Sword.

Bunhelier had an ill-natured personality. It had a health recovery speed that made a

damage of 10,000 or 100,000 meaningless. After being hit by 100,000 Army Massacre Sword, the grey scales that were finely scratched healed in an instant. Grid's attacks couldn't keep up with their resilience.

"Ah...!"

The spectators and viewers were dazzled by the colourful effects and noticed late. Bunhelier's health hadn't decreased at all despite being hit by Grid dozens of times.

'Does it have 10 billion health?'

It was estimated that Great Demon Belial had 2 billion health. It wasn't strange that a dragon, which overwhelmed even the 1st Great Demon Baal, possessed at least 10 billion health. Given the defense and resilience, it was impossible to raid Bunhelier, even if he used 100,000 Army Massacre Sword endlessly. Grid didn't even know about the One Million Army Massacre Sword.

"...I-I'm sorry."

*Kung!* As Kraugel hit Bunhelier's snout and turned the giant eyes to him, Kraugel apologized to Grid. He had no choice but to bow his head. Dragon. Kraugel felt awe towards the world's strongest creature.

*Kuwaaaaang!*

The ground shook. Grid couldn't maintain his balance and fell down. It wasn't an earthquake. It was a wave created by Bunhelier's 'one step' as it tried to trample Kraugel on the ground. For a dragon, the small and feeble human was like an ant. Grid who penetrated the defense and left small scratches on the scales? From Bunhelier's point of view, he was no different from Kraugel. It felt a little annoyed and wasn't inspired at all. He had no special interest in the ants that were biting at his nails.

*Kurarararara!*

Bunhelier blew out a breath. Grid and Kraugel had no way to withstand the powerful attack that swept through the ruins of the old castle. People were upset when Grid and Kraugel turned to grey at the same time.

"...Even Grid and Kraugel can't match a dragon."

"The range of the breath is a scam. Who can endure that? Even if all the players are gathered together, they will be wiped out in 10 minutes.

"By the way, what's this? Why did a dragon suddenly appear in PvP?"

"..."

The crowd and viewers belatedly detected the abnormality. They recovered from the dragon's presence that had overwhelmed them. People were angry because the confrontation that had waited 1 year and 3 months for came to a futile end.

"Is this a joke?"

"I want my admission fee back!"

"Boo! Boooooo!"

The crowd was convinced that this incident was due to the organizers and criticisms poured out. They were no longer concerned with Bunhelier. They couldn't have any interest because it was an existence in another world. The public wanted a target that was in reach.

After Grid and Kraugel's deaths. Bunhelier stood alone on the PvP area where everything was destroyed. It was the moment when the worst existence, that should've terrorized the world along with Insane Dragon Nevartan, felt a sense of uncertainty due to an unfamiliar situation.

At this time.

"Ah! Look there!"

"What? Was it staged?"

The screen was switched. The PvP stage had changed. It was a space large enough to make humans look like dust. A little while ago, Bunhelier had suddenly showed up. Now there was a huge place that looked like there was room for it, even with its two wings wide open.

"Is this a dragon lair?"

As soon as they noticed, they guessed it was the new PvP stage. Then Grid and Kraugel, who had been resurrected, checked the notifications in front of them.

[You were killed by Bunhelier. The evil dragon's venom has penetrated deep into your lungs. Until you die again, all types of health recovery are reduced by 60%.]

“...”

It was a terrible curse that could only be solved with death. Kraugel was silent as a bitter expression appeared on his face. For the first time in his life, he felt a sense of great helplessness.

In reality and in Satisfy. Every time he met an opponent better than himself, he had a belief that he could jump over the opponent one day. For him, dragons were unfamiliar presences that couldn't be reached even if he tried for the rest of his life. Kraugel didn't want to meet a dragon again and it was deeply engraved in his heart.

Grid was different from him.

“Ah, shit...!”

Grid was jumping around while huffing and puffing. An opponent he couldn't catch up with in his life? Unlike Kraugel, Grid had experienced it countless times. He had learned how to grow using the feelings of helplessness and frustration as nutrients. His attitude was in contrast to Kraugel.

“This damn lizard scum! Not even apologizing after killing someone? Ah, bastard! The next time we meet, I will be sure to get revenge! Kill it at all cost... No, subtract half blood! Yes! I will make an item to counter a dragon!”

“...”

Kraugel was surprised at Grid's burning desire. Grid's eyes presented Kraugel with an unexpected future.

“This lizard, I will summon it again for you later.”

“What?”

"At that time, you and I will be armed with dragon slayer items and cut off his layer of scales. And... huhuhu! Make armor out of the scales. How about it? Aren't you happy just imagining it?

"..."

Kraugel became aware that Grid was a great person. But he didn't expect it to be this much.

'His vessel fills my vessel.'

With a complicated expression, Kraugel returned to reality.

"Then what about this?"

Grid noticed the cameras reopening and noticed that the PvP match would resume. He was affected by the evil dragon's curse. The recovery abilities of Doran's Ring, Elfin Stone's Ring, and Cray's Power had become ineffective. The situation was the same with Kraugel. It was a deadly curse for Kraugel, who had the ability to recover with the Troll King's Curse, Bitter Grief Spear, and the Red Sword.

Of course, the S.A. Group didn't overlook this. The organizers released the curse on the two people by borrowing the name of a god.

[Goddess Rebecca has healed you of the evil dragon's extreme poisoning.]

At the same time.

[Did you enjoy the emergence of the evil dragon Bunhelier, which made the PvP finals more colorful? From now on, the second round of the finals will begin on a new stage! This stage is a dragon lair! It's the nest of the evil dragon Bunhelier!]

The host received a notice and shouted in a loud voice.

Grid and Kraugel laughed as they discovered the situation.

"The host is also suffering."

"I agree."

"Let's finish this quickly. Fighting, fighting, and fighting again. I'm exhausted."

"A sea of hope."

No further words were necessary. The resources such as health and skill cooldown time were restored to what they were before Bunhelier appeared. The two people rushed towards each other.

*Paaaat!*

Grid's attack power was high now that fighting energy exceeded 50, making it difficult for Kraugel. He started to be pushed on the defensive in the sword exchange. He evaded and then launched a large number of swords with Control Sword. The swords moved in every direction so that Grid couldn't avoid them.

Grid didn't find a way to escape, but he wasn't afraid. When he looked with a Blacksmith's Eyes, the swords had a rating from unique~ legendary. Then what about Grid's defense? Grid judged that it would be hard for the weapons to penetrate his armor unless Kraugel wielded them directly.

*Puk! Puuooook!*

Grid's battle style was exchanging flesh and blood! He tried to counterattack against Kraugel every time he was hit by a sword. Then he suddenly stopped. Some of the swords fired by Kraugel pierced his right elbow. Grid was unable to swing his arms because the physical conditions prevented the rotation of his joints.

'Crazy...!'

It was guided?

'What is this...?'

The moment that Grid was feeling irritation and excitement.

"Condemnation Sword."

*Pajik! Paijijik!*

A silver sword was raised. It was the skill that was blocked by Bunhelier's emergence. Now it appeared again as a threat to Grid.

*Clink!*

It was too late to move the hand holding his sword. Grid judged and raised his left hand, summoning Iyarugt from his inventory. Kraugel expected Grid to fight back with Revolve. But Grid's choice was different.

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword!"

'At this timing?'

*Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!*

The strongest skill that penetrated even a dragon's scales washed over Kraugel. He was swallowed up as a silver light flashed from the tip of his sword.

# Chapter 771

People were different. They might be looking at the same thing but would feel something else. Most people who felt good were already ahead.

"This time, Grid was ahead."

The evil dragon Bunhelier. The world's strongest presence that could never be raided. When Kraugel didn't want to see it again, Grid dreamt of getting revenge. It was a huge difference. It was clear that after Bunhelier, Grid would achieve a much faster growth.

In order to avoid falling behind, Kraugel also couldn't turn away from Bunhelier. In addition, Grid drove the sky above the sky to the edge.

"Condemnation Sword!"

Condemnation Sword was one of the Sword Saint's ultimate skills which boasted an attack power equivalent to 100% of the target's defense. It couldn't penetrate Bunhelier's defense, but it was enough to inflict damage on Grid. White Fang was surrounded by a silver light as it rushed to Grid.

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword!"

"...!"

Kraugel thought Grid would choose to defend or counterattack, but he ended up using an unexpected skill. It was the strongest skill that dealt damage even to Bunhelier. It was an unexpected development for Kraugel.

'Why?'

Grid grew stronger as fighting energy accumulated. From a certain point of view, it was right to keep fighting energy at the maximum. However, Grid consumed fighting energy by using 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Kraugel had a headache. Why did Grid make this choice? Kraugel questioned it.

"Freely Move!"

He opened up the power of Secret Hero and avoided all the strikes of 100,000 Army Massacre Sword that was release at close range.

"Whoa...!"

Sounds of admiration flowed from everywhere. The crowd was overwhelmed by Grid, who wielded the sword 30 times in one second and Kraugel, who avoided all the swift attacks.

*Pajik! Pajijijik!*

Before the red spots in the air disappeared.

*Teook!*

Kraugel reached Grid's side and inserted Condemnation Sword.

[You have dealt 53,400 damage to the target!]

*Puooook!*

White Fang sunk deep into Grid's waist! Grid shed blood at the critical blow. The moment Kraugel grabbed the spirit of victory. The crowd gasped. People now admired Grid more than ever after he damaged Bunhelier. It was a standard similar to the sky above the sky. There were many people who felt sorry that he would be defeated after a long fight.

On the other hand, Kraugel was trying to link the White Sword, Black Sword, and Twin Sword combo.

At this time.

"...!"

Kraugel's eyes widened. He perceived the intense aura gathered at the end of Grid's sword. Kraugel knew what it was.

'Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle...!'

It was the ultimate swordsmanship that Grid showed in the Great Demon Belial raid! It was the power that Kraugel feared most from Grid. The reason why Kraugel blocked Grid's footwork during the finals was to stop Grid from using Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

Grid completed it. It was while Kraugel was focused on the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword!

"This was his intention."

Grid consumed fighting energy and used 100,000 Army Massacre Sword to disperse Kraugel's attention? He wasted his best skill in order to complete the footwork? No, in the first place, was 100,000 Army Massacre Sword his best skill? No. Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle was the strongest.

*Chill.*

Kraugel's spine was cold and sweaty.

*Kuoooooh-!*

The Enlightenment Sword roared. Kraugel realized the sword in front of him was flickering with flames. He had been trapped the moment Grid used 100,000 Army Massacre Sword on Bunhelier. Kraugel was so dazzled by 100,000 Army Massacre Sword that Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle became obsolete and Freely Move was consumed.

*Puok!*

*Puk puk!*

The Enlightenment Sword continuously pierced Kraugel. The Enlightenment Sword was like a fish that met water. The powerful sword containing killing intent fluttered like a butterfly but was as quick as a bee.

[You have suffered 43,100 damage.]

"Kuk...!"

It was difficult for Kraugel to completely avoid it. The Super Sensitivity passive. It had an advantage of there being no penalty compared to the active version, but it was true that the function was weakened. The story would've been different if Kraugel had reached level 300 and his stats had gone through the third awakening. His high agility would've maximized the Super Sensitivity passive and he might've been able to avoid Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

But now Kraugel's level was in the 200's. He was also using Control Sword to keep the God Hands in check. From the time he got the Sword Saint class to now, it was too little time.

*Puk puk!*

[You have been hit by a lethal blow!]

[A legend doesn't die easily. You can resist all attacks for 5 seconds with a minimum of health.]

Kraugel went into the immortal state despite his Sword Saint class reducing the damage. Grid shouted as Kraugel was swept away by Linked Kill that lead to Wave.

“Next year's hero...!”

Last year's winner of PvP, Kraugel became the hero. The idol of everyone, their goal. Grid looked at him and burned with motivation. He was desperate to be crowned the hero next year.

“I will be next year's hero!”

*Kurururung!*

Grid's desire for victory was stronger than ever. As if in response to this, the Enlightenment Sword was more eager than usual. Black flames exploded in succession while a red lightning bolt struck Kraugel.

“Ugh! Passing the sky!”

Kraugel was covered with waves of sword energy. He gritted his teeth and tried to

counterattack against the Pinnacle portion.

Passing the Sky. It was the strongest counterattack that Kraugel created based on Tearing the Sky. The power was at least equivalent to Revolve and unlike Grid, it was possible to cast it immediately without needing footwork. Strictly speaking, it was a counterattack that exceeded Revolve.

Then.

*Jjejeeeong!*

It faced the end portion of Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

“Cough!”

A large amount of blood poured from Grid’s chest. Right here.

"Ohhhhh!"

Kraugel relied on the immortality passive to unleash fierce attacks. He would deal the final strike to Grid, make him also consume the immortal passive, and then reverse the battle. But that plan was blocked.

[Your health has dropped below 10%. 31,600 health is instantly restored due to the effect of Tiramet’s Power attached to the Rune of Darkness.]

[A great king puts his safety first. Due to the First King title effect, a shield with 92,800 defense will be created.]

“What...?”

Kraugel let out a confused cry of alarm. White Fang that stabbed at Grid.

*Jjejeeeong!*

It was blocked by a shield that shone around Grid like the sun.

“Amazing!”

"Wow..."

The crowd and viewers were busy admiring it. They were amazed by Grid's ability to restore health and create a splendid shield. His tanking ability was just like the famous tankers, Vantner and Bubat.

"Blackening!"

"Splitting the Sky...!"

Kraugel didn't give up. His successive sword techniques threatened Grid. It was regrettable that Kraugel couldn't use all the skills of a Sword Saint due to his low level and lacking resources.

*Jjejejeok!*

*Chaeeeeeng!*

Kraugel and Grid's swords moved without stopping. Grid's specs rose at a rapid pace due to Blackening and fighting energy, while Kraugel lost his immortal passive. In the end, Kraugel had to make a choice. He recovered the swords he was controlling. He ignored the God Hands and rejoined his dispersed attention. He regained his concentration and his control skills.

*Jjejeong! Jjeejeeeong!*

"Kuk...!"

Grid was driven on the defensive. His radiantly shining shield gradually lost its light. But Kraugel was a flame on the verge of going out. As soon as the God Hands joined Grid, Kraugel was gradually neutralized as he lost most of his resources.

Finally.

*Peeeeeeong!*

*Puk! Puook!*

The moment Kraugel broke through Grid's shield, Grid's sword pierced Kraugel's chest. After he became Pagma's Descendant. Grid had gone through all types of quests

and even rose to the throne. On the other hand, Kraugel had only been focused on levelling since he changed to a Sword Saint.

This was the difference between the two people. This fact was clear from the beginning. Time wasn't on Kraugel's side.

"Grid."

The God Hands were turned into Lifael's Spear with Item Transformation and the four spears pierced Kraugel's flesh. Before he turned to grey, he knew that everyone was focused on him and spoke.

"In the future, you are my idol and I will be the challenger."

Kraugel knew. The gaze that Grid always looked at him with. Envy and longing. There would be no more burdensome gaze. Now he was finally free.

*Pisik.*

The moment that Kraugel smiled warmly and touched Grid's cheek with a bloody hand.

*Shaaaaaaah-*

Kraugel's body turned to grey. The winner of the 3rd National Competition's PvP event was decided.

〔As a result, South Korean is first in the overall rankings!!〕

"Waaaaaaaaah!"

South Korea heated up. The 50 million people in South Korea were screaming. Some people laughed happily while others cried.

"Our son is the best!"

"Oppa...!"

Of course, the people who shed tears the most was Grid's family. They witnessed Grid beating the world's best player and being recognized, so his family was grateful.

On the other hand, Grid was left alone on the PvP stage.

“...”

He gritted his teeth. It was because he was about to burst into tears. He kept silent for a moment before shouting in a trembling voice.

“Log out.”

It was time to return to reality. He won the title that he had dreamt of.

◇ ◇ ◇

〔Player Grid had broken the sky above the sky and led South Korea to be first in the overall rankings.〕

〔Ahhh, who would've expected South Korea to be number one?〕

〔I'm proud to tears. Player Grid is indeed the son that South Korea is proud of.〕

“Player Grid! Please tell us what you are feeling!”

“How do you feel about being crowned the new sky?”

Hundreds, thousand of camera shutters went off without interruption. The questions of the reporters and cheers of the crowd were endless. It had been four years and five months since Satisfy opened and the world changed. Interest was hot. Grid's name and face decorated the world news. The feats that Grid accumulated so far was unveiled all over the world.

Grid had become the new sky.

‘Everybody...’

His parents and Sehee. Khan, Irene, and Lord.

Grid stood on the podium as people watched him with eyes filled with envy. Grid wanted to rush and see his ‘family’ as soon as possible. He wanted to hold them in his arms and bask in their pride.

*Snap! Snap snap!*

The camera shutters of various reporters started to click faster. The reporters had an instinctive feeling. It was a sense of duty that told them they needed to take photos of this gentle and loving Grid.

# Chapter 772

"Waaaaahhhh!"

"Grid finally did it!"

"The best! Always exciting!"

"Keok! God Grid...! I love you, God Grid!!"

It was strange and proud to see Grid on the podium higher than Kraugel. He broke Kraugel, who'd reigned supreme. In the past two years, he'd led South Korea to the second rank despite it being known for being weak in Satisfy. Now he gave them the honor of being the top country this year.

It was natural for the Korean players to feel unlimited gratitude and respect for him. Even Eat Spicy Jokbal, who hated Grid on the surface, was thrilled. He realized there was still deep patriotism in his heart and embraced Peak Sword.

"You should try and persuade Princess to join the Overgeared Guild." Viola said with a scolding expression.

On the monitor, Grid was being interviewed.

"Just like anyone who played Satisfy, Kraugel was an idol and goal for me. I heard his heroic stories and burned with fighting spirit when hearing his saga. Then I worked hard. This is the result."

Grid stopped speaking and looked at Kraugel, who was also surrounded by reporters. Grid's eyes were no different than before.

"Thanks to Kraugel, I was able to reach where I am now. Kraugel will forever be my idol and competitor."

Grid closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He recalled everything that happened in reality and in Satisfy as he struggled at the bottom before he reached the peak. He opened his eyes and smiled at the hundreds of cameras focused on him. He already

organized his thoughts.

"And... the best capsules are from the Comet Group."

Grid still had the sponsorship of the Comet Group this year. The most important point was that the Comet Group's sales jumped thanks to Grid. Grid's words had a bigger impact on sales than the combination of TV, Internet, and newspaper ads. All the Comet Group employees felt unlimited gratitude and affection for Grid. The chairman of the Comet Group had a plan to marry his youngest daughter to Grid. But the youngest daughter of the Comet Group stubbornly refused. The world's best women, Yura and Jishuka, were standing by Grid's side. She wasn't a match for Grid when she was just a rich daughter.

Overall, it was a friendly atmosphere.

"Then... what about next year?"

"Yes. Just imagine the hell."

"What can we do? We just have to give up."

Chris, Damian, Pon, Regas, Katz, etc. They felt despair because they knew Grid's power. They didn't have a sense of how to win against Grid, who thanks to winning this year's PvP, would appear as the Hero next year.

"Infinite stiffness is the default and his God Hands can turn into all types of items."

"Blackening and Belial's Power..."

"How can we beat Grid's Enlightenment Sword?"

"I don't want him to summon Iyarugt. Maybe we can win in two years?"

"..."

Was it possible to beat him after two years? No one was sure. They didn't say it, but they already knew the answer. They wouldn't participate in next year's Breaking the Hero. That was the easiest thing to do.

◊ ◊ ◊

"Are you going back to South Korea?"

"Yes. I want to eat the rice that my mother prepares."

"...A mother's cooking. I'm envious."

"Eh? Kraugel, don't you live with your mother? What? Is your mother sick again?"

"No. Don't take my words seriously."

Tokyo Dome had been the stage of the National Competition for the third year. After the closing ceremony, Grid and Kraugel were sitting side by side on the empty stands. Both of them were illuminated by the dim lighting.

"In the future, your area of activities will be wider."

"Isn't it the same for you?"

"I'm an individual and you're a king. You will obtain more information and visit more places."

"Huhu, are you nervous? You don't have to worry. Don't I also have to shoulder the responsibility of a king? I will be going forward with heavy footsteps while you will have a light gait."

"...Let's not keep talking about this. Grid, remember one thing."

"What is it?"

Kraugel's eyes were very dignified. What did he want to say? Grid's smiling face went away. He took a serious listening attitude.

Kraugel started talking. "If you visit the East Continent as a king, you will certainly be intertwined with the Hwan Kingdom."

Kraugel also had eyes and ears. He visited the East Continent much earlier than Grid and knew roughly what Grid had gone through on the continent. However, he didn't know the detailed information of what Grid had already encountered. He only knew

that Grid was active in Pangea and moved some of its residents to the Overgeared Kingdom.

"You should've heard about the Hwan Kingdom. They're the only religion and ruler of the East Continent."

"They're like the Saharan Empire."

Kraugel spoke seriously. It was a story he already knew so he couldn't take it lightly. Kraugel shook his head at Grid. "There's no comparison to the empire. Didn't I tell you? They're the only religion and ruler of the East Continent. They're gods to the people of the East Continent."

"..."

The yangban Garam passed through Grid's head. In the meantime, the word 'yangban' emerged from Kraugel's mouth.

"Yangban... They aren't those who fancy themselves as pseudo-gods. They're the ones who consider themselves as gods because they have the right qualities and skills." Kraugel finally cut to the chase. "Don't mix up with them until you are at least level 500. If you have to visit the East Continent, then visit it as an individual. I don't know what will happen if your kingdom gets tied up with the Hwan Kingdom."

"What? Are they really dangerous?"

"Strictly speaking, they aren't evil. But their ideas are different. Think about them as monsters."

Grid recalled with Garam was like and fully sympathized with Kraugel. Grid smiled and asked a question, "Are they that strong? It's enough to make you act like this."

Kraugel nodded without hesitation.

"They're strong. To you right now, they're a great mountain, another mountain on top of the great mountain and the sky above it."

"..."

Was this referring to the Chiyou test that Garam mentioned? Had Kraugel met up with

them? Grid was filled with pure curiosity when he heard Kraugel's voice.

"But."

"...?"

"They aren't as strong as Bunhelier."

"Huhu." Grid understood Kraugel's meaning and stretched. "Okay. I understand. I'll be alert. I can avoid them, but I won't be daunted by those who aren't a dragon."

"I'm glad that you understand."

Yes, Grid just had to be alert. He wouldn't be involved with those sociopaths unless they were interested first. Grid was strong. Kraugel believed this but he didn't know Grid had already become a target of a yangban.

"Then I'm going. I'm going home to eat."

Grid said farewell with a handshake. He wanted to have a glass of soju with Kraugel, but it wasn't yet time. The day that he shared a cup with Kraugel...

"Three rounds."

"...?"

"A man's match should be decided in three rounds? I was thinking about it but the first time we fought doesn't count."

"What do you mean by that?"

"It was just after you fought Piaro. Wouldn't you have won if you were in a normal state?"

"It's pointless to think this way. I lost at that time. This is the truth."

"No, I'm not convinced." Grid pulled back his hand. He immediately turned away from Kraugel. "Let's play the third round in the National Competition next year. Then we will have a cup of soju on that day."

"You...!"

Grid ignored Kraugel's cry. He headed straight to the parking lot where Toon was waiting. Grid had noticed. After being freed from his high position, Kraugel was planning to seclude himself from the world. Kraugel would act like he used to and not do public activities again.

"You shouldn't retire alone."

Kraugel must be in Grid's field of view. If Grid didn't see Kraugel, he would feel insecure. Grid had to confirm whether Kraugel was still behind him or had already gone ahead.

"Just relax and continue to play against me, Kraugel."

There were many ways to invalidate the three rounds. Grid had overwhelmingly conditions not just in the first round, but the second and third as well. It was too unfair.

A huge smile. Toon jumped as he saw Grid smiling in the middle. It was because Grid was making a different expression from normal. He seemed like a completely different person from this morning.

'The best...'

A warrior became a blacksmith, joined the Tzedakah Guild, became the master of the Overgeared Guild, and eventually became the king of the Overgeared Kingdom. His evolution was still ongoing. What would Grid look like a year from now? Toon was full of expectations when he suddenly received a call.

"...What?"

It was the worst news. Toon paled and looked back. Grid was so tired that he had fallen asleep.

"Did something happen?" The driver asked.

"Go to the airport instantly." Toon urged. He prayed eagerly for Grid to be having a good dream.



Let's go back in time. It was time for the PvP finals between Grid and Kraugel to start.

"It's here."

Veradin led the elites of Immortal and stood in front of the smithy in the center of Reinhardt. It was a huge smithy. No, to be exact, it was a smithy complex. There were five smithies in the center of Reinhardt that could accommodate at least 30 furnaces. The alarming part was that there were many smithies still under construction.

"Reinhardt is said to be a city without a night and it's all because of the smithies."

The necromancers of Immortal clicked their tongues. On the other hand, Veradin was smiling.

'Grid will be quite angry if all the smithies here are burned.'

The legendary farmer Piaro, who lived in Siren, had disappeared after the vampire expedition. Grid's first knight Jude was still in Bairan. In addition, the great magician Ashur was guarding the border.

Grid's three heavenly kings weren't in Reinhardt. He was sure of it since it was information received from Empress Marie. In addition, the National Competition was now occurring. Most of the Overgeared members who were supposed to replace the three heavenly kings were mostly away. It was obvious that Reinhardt's defenses were weak at this time.

"But shouldn't I be careful? First of all, I will assassinate Khan who is the target."

*Sururuk.*

He secretly summoned a death knight in the darkness. It was a death knight made from the corpse of the assassin who was called 'reaper in the dark.' Veradin's heart pounded. There was a need to weaken the power of the Overgeared Kingdom for the future of Immortal. He led the elites of Immortal for this reason.

This incident would make Grid furious. What would happen when he found out Agnus was behind it? It was obvious. Grid would be filled with killing intent. What would Agnus look like in a dire crisis? Veradin was curious as well. He wanted to observe all

aspects of the madman.

That's right. Like Lauel said in the past, Veradin wasn't loyal to Agnus. Agnus was just an interesting experiment. Grid was selected as a sacrifice for the experiment.

# Chapter 773

Khan's family had produced excellent blacksmiths for generations, while the king of the Eternal Kingdom changed 11 times. They owned a famous smithy. It was no wonder that Khan's pride was as high as the sky. Since his youth, he had been praised as the best blacksmith in the eastern part of the Eternal Kingdom and dreamt about becoming the first blacksmith of the continent. He didn't doubt that his dream would become a reality.

But reality wasn't that easy. It was cruel. Reality trampled on his dreams, tearing them to ashes. His beloved wife and son died. Khan experienced great heartbreak and spent a few years as a drunkard. He held a bottle in his hand instead of a hammer and looked at the river instead of a fire.

His wife was a childhood friend he had grown up with. In the process of welcoming her as his lover and wife, Khan's affection was incomparably greater than the world's gold and treasures. Then he lost her overnight. There was also his son who loved her as much as Khan did.

Khan was left alone and had no meaning in his life. If the Mero Company hadn't coveted the smithy Khan inherited from his father, he would've chosen to obediently die. But the Mero Company coveted his smithy. Khan had to endure somehow. He recalled his duty and suppressed his grief in order to maintain his smithy.

It was a meaningless effort. His grief was very large. He couldn't keep back the poison for long. In the end, he gave up everything in life. He gave everything to the damn swindlers and was on his way to making the extreme choice of cutting off his life.

The savior who appeared at this time was Grid. Khan still vividly remembered Grid's first appearance. A young man with a sullen expression and a dead look in his eyes. Grid resembled himself. But their skills were different. After he saved Khan from the crisis, he became Khan's disciple, friend, and son. Now he was a king.

“Haha...”

Deep in the night. Khan carefully polished the metal and wiped the tears that suddenly flowed down. 80 years old. He had lived longer than others. Perhaps that was why? He

was keenly aware of it. He couldn't sleep easily, he was submerged in memories, and he kept shedding tears.

"It's time for me to go."

Every person had a fixed lifetime. He would naturally know how much life he had left once it was time. Some people might see Khan as only an NPC, but he was also a person. He instinctively sensed it was time for him to leave. That's why he was busy hammering. His hammer was filled with a desire to pay back Grid as much as possible before Khan left.

*Ttang! Ttang!*

Did he want to prove that the blood of Albatino, who inspired Pagma, flowed inside his body? Khan was obsessed with making a better Valhalla. He wished that this armor would help preserve Grid's life.

'Perhaps this will be my posthumous work.'

This was his last chance. It was an opportunity to prove his life as a blacksmith wasn't in vain. An opportunity to prove that King Grid's teaching wasn't lacking!

*Ttang! Ttang!*

Khan wanted Valhalla to be completed as the greatest armor on this earth. He wanted to make an armor that Grid wouldn't be ashamed of. He reminded himself of this every time he saw Grid's armor.

*Ttaaang!*

Khan's hammering was more sophisticated than ever. It was so delicate that it was comparable to a legendary blacksmith. It was a hammer containing the desires of a blacksmith. Now Khan was making his life's work. It wasn't a miracle, but all his experience that allowed him to display a greater ability than usual.

*Ttang! Ttang!*

The blacksmiths alternated working day and night on the mass produced Grid set. Their hammering could be heard despite the late hour. Khan's hammering sound was exceptionally clear.

"The chief is in good condition today?"

"I agree. I'm already anticipating some monster-like work."

"But I'm a bit worried. It looks like he hasn't been sleeping for the past few days..."

A strange voice entered the blacksmiths' ears.

"There's a saying about the final radiance of a setting sun (dying flash)."

It was a low voice. The voice came from the entrance.

*Clack! Clack clack clack!*

The sounds that followed were a bit strange. It sounded like footsteps but were very light.

"...?"

Khan turned his gaze towards the entrance and was shocked.

"Heok!"

"S-Skeleton...?"

They weren't mistaken. Bones occupied the entrance to the smithy. The lifeless bodies moved in a threatening manner. Skeleton knight. At the center of these skeletons, the white-haired Veradin fixed his gaze on Khan.

"The appearance of working severe hours while burning your life. It's a very desirous attitude for a worker. It is no wonder that you have the favor of the Overgeared King."

"Who are you?"

The smithy complex was the most important area in the Overgeared Kingdom. Soldiers were always stationed here and the knights patrolled every hour. Now an unidentified intruder appeared in the smithy that was at the center. Khan didn't know what types of terrible things happened outside.

Khan replied to Khan, who showed extreme vigilance.

"I'm sorry, but I'm a villain."

*Swipe.*

Veradin winked and the robed men behind him clapped their hands. It was a signal for the skeleton knights to move.

"H-Hik!"

"K-Khan! Run away!"

The frightened blacksmiths gathered to stall the skeleton knights. They knew that Khan's life was more important than their own. Khan was their respected mentor and the closest one to King Grid!

"Kuaaaack!"

"Ugh...! K-Khan! Hurry!"

The skeleton knights were the advanced undead that could only be produced with the body of a knight. Since they were already dead, they weren't afraid of death. They were given the power of the necromancers and demonstrated a transcendent ability. It was a level where knights could barely subdue them.

Then what about the blacksmiths? They had excellent strength and stamina because they used their bodies for a living, but they were still civilians in the end. Five skeleton knights instantly slaughtered dozens of blacksmiths.

"Jane...! Abra!"

Khan screamed with a white face. The young people who would become the pillars of the kingdom lost their lives. His sense of despair was great.

"Come forward. Isn't it easier for you to quickly accept the inevitable fate?"

The sacrifice of the young blacksmiths to save an old man made Veradin unhappy. It was awkward to have unnecessary casualties. He was sensitive to the value of life. He didn't mind killing for a purpose, but he disliked unplanned killing. Veradin blocked the entrance with a frown and hastened Khan's death.

The result was that a sound was heard. Something fell from the high ceiling of the smithy and the skeleton knights were cut apart.

"...!"

Veradin's eyes shook. It was because he knew the identity of the man who destroyed five skeleton knights summoned by the elites of Immortal.

"Faker, why are you here?"

As a close confidant of Grid, shouldn't Faker be watching the PvP match right now? He should support his master like a loyal dog. The doubtful Veradin read Faker's eyes and snarled.

"I see. The god of killing... Is it more interesting to be a god than a dog?"

*Teook!*

Just before Veradin's words finished. Faker used Acceleration to move faster than anyone and he reached Veradin's side. His weapon was one of the Belial series of items received at the Overgeared Kingdom's founding ceremony. The dagger made of Belial's bones stabbed at Veradin.

*Puok!*

[You have suffered 12,900 damage.]

[You have received the curse of fire and darkness!]

[Every five seconds, damage equal to 4.8% of your total health will be received. This effect will last for 30 seconds.]

[As a necromancer, you have resisted the curse of darkness.]

"Did you conclude it's better to act first?"

Veradin rushed back and quickly drank a health potion. The moment Faker reached him again.

*Ttaak!*

Veradin raised a finger.

Then.

“Ugh!”

“...?”

Khan’s groan was heard and Faker looked back with panic. A death knight appeared from the darkness and pointed a sword at Khan’s neck. Veradin saw that Faker was unable to move and his eyes curved in a half moon.

“I knew that this blacksmith was Grid’s close friend. But I didn’t know it was enough to get your protection. Aren’t blacksmith craftsmen common in the Overgeared Kingdom?”

“...”

“Hrmm? You don’t seem shocked by the surprise attack itself? Is it thanks to Lauel? That friend was able to predict this type of situation?”

The rewards for the National Competition were huge. In particular, the reward for a medal was 10 times bigger than a raid. But big profits were accompanied by big risk. Why were rankers and hermits reluctant to take part in the National Competition?

While their competitors were wasting time with the official schedule, they were hunting and raiding in order to achieve a steady growth. It wasn’t guaranteed to get a medal when participating in the National Competition and they might fall behind. In severe cases, forces could invade while the participants were away.

Of course, there was a considerable number of participants in the National Competition. In the end, they made their choice and were responsible for their choices. Lauel knew this face and would’ve prepared some countermeasures during the competition.

“It isn’t surprising to put a big person beside the target. That Lauel, is he a fortune teller?”

Lael wasn't a fortune teller. He was just prepared to protect what was most important to Grid. Kasim was beside Irene and Lord so he put Faker on Khan. That's why he was here when Veradin struck. But Veradin didn't seem panicked.

"I know that you are a talented person, but who knows? Will it work against me?"

Veradin was the right arm of Agnus, who could become the peak of two billion users. Of course, it was just a superficial relationship. But Veradin was able to become Agnus' right-hand man because he was qualified. On the other hand, Faker wasn't Grid's right-hand man. He was only one of Grid's many subordinates. It meant that their levels were different.

*Ttaak!*

Veradin flicked his fingers with an emotionless face.

*Pahat!*

Faker immediately accelerated.

*Jeeeeeeong!*

"...!"

The death knight would've been surprised if it had feelings. No, there was no surprise. Faker's dagger stopped the blade that was going to stab Khan and immediately linked an attack skill.

*Chukak. Chukakakakak!*

The sharp dagger pieced the death knight several times. A bright purple light covered the death knight and the death knight was in a state of blindness. It was the Luminous Ray Flash.

*Peeok!*

Faker kicked the death knight and grabbed Khan's wrist. He wanted to first take Khan to a safe place. At that moment.

"Tower of Command."

"Tower of Command."

"Tower of Command."

*Ku ku ku ku!*

A black tower with a height of one meter appeared around Khan and Faker. The number of towers increased. It was a necromancer's special skill, which weakened the power of the living and gave absolute power to the dead.

*Kuwaaaaah!*

The death knight flew towards Faker. It wielded its sword randomly, as if not caring if Faker or Khan died. It had been affected by the blindness state.

But the death knight recovered the moment the Tower of Command was used. The reason the attacks looked disorganized was due to the style of swordsmanship. It was an unrefined, fierce attack that was like a wild beast. Faker saw that its Sword Mastery level was quite high.

*Tadak!*

*Clack! Clack clack!*

The situation was becoming worse and worse. The skeleton knights, which had fallen to Dance of the Reaper when Faker first appeared, now stood up one by one. They gradually approached while armed with threatening weapons. The situation wasn't good and Khan shouted, "Don't worry about this old man. Just run away!"

"..."

"I'm an old man who doesn't have long left to live! You don't need to risk yourself to save me!"

"Your life is worth 100 times more than mine."

Faker opened his mouth for the first time. Khan was amazed because it was the first time he heard the voice of the normally taciturn Faker in years.

Faker whispered to him. "Hold on tightly. I will move faster."

*Sukakak!*

Faker's dark dagger flashed red. At the same time, the bloody demonic energy shattered the towers and mangled the skeleton knights. Only the death knight succeeded in evading. Khan and Faker already reached the ceiling of the smithy.

“Overgeared...!”

The elites of Immortal were fed up. It wasn't easy to estimate the power of the Overgeared members, who were armed with non-standard equipment. They were filled with the thought that their plan might go to hell.

*Kwaaaaah!*

The death knight moved to intercept Faker. It was Veradin's response to Faker's determination to protect Khan.

*Peeeeeeong!*

*Chaeng! Chaeeeeng!*

Faker frowned as he exchanged blows with the death knight. It was because the death knight started exuding a terrible poison.

“Cough...!”

The poisoned Khan coughed up dark blood.

# Chapter 774

*Wiiiiing!*

Faker whistled. It was a signal to call the Overgeared Shadows waiting outside. But there was no reaction.

"Our Immortal also has huge forces. There are many people as talented as you. To them, your subordinates aren't so difficult." Veradin said. The Death Knight crossed several pillars to get to Faker, like a performing monkey. 10 new skeleton knights entered the smithy. They were summoned by the necromancers who smashed the Overgeared Shadows waiting outside and joined in.

Furthermore. The bodies of the blacksmiths turned to ghouls and started to rise up.

*Chaaeng! Chaaeng!*

Faker's nervousness reached its peak as he blocked the death knight's dagger persistently pursuing him. The poisoned Khan's health continued to decline. Faker was alone and the number of enemies kept increasing. As time went by, he was at a disadvantage. His first priority was to get out of here, but the death knight called Kyleo was stronger than expected. He was an erosion type assassin who used poison as his main force, while also having excellent melee combat ability. It was clear that he was a strong person in his lifetime.

"Cough! Cough!"

Death Knight Kyleo used Veradin's mana to constantly release poison. Khan's poisoning status became worse and the speed at which his health was consumed accelerated.

*Chwarururuk!*

The illusion technique released intermittently limited Faker's ability. Since Faker had to fight while protecting Khan, his eyes were tied up.

{Faker: I need support at the 1st smithy.}

He tried shouting in the guild window but no one responding. It was clear that the Overgeared members had left to watch the finals between the Overgeared King Grid and Kraugel. Did he blame them? No. If Lauel hadn't called him to protect Khan in case of danger, he would've logged out as well.

*Chaaeng! Chaeeeeng!*

After discovering that Faker was vulnerable to the illusion technique, Kyleo increased the number of times it was used. He didn't care about Veradin's mana as he used skills continuously against Faker.

"Kuk...!"

Faker was caught in the illusions and found it hard to tell what was real. Hundreds of Kyleo's daggers were visible while Khan seemed like skeletons. The pillars on both sides of him turned into snake heads.

*Puok!*

*Seokeok!*

The number of injuries on the body of the confused Faker increased. He soon fell to the ground and the skeleton knights and ghouls flocked to him. Veradin's face was filled with joy. Rather than taking care of his own body as he fell, Faker aimed to protect Khan. Veradin could see how important Khan's position in the Overgeared Kingdom was.

'Okay. I have set the target properly.'

It was good. The Overgeared Kingdom would receive extensive damage and Grid would be furious. How far would Agnus' madness reach as he was hunted by Grid's rage?

*Duguen! Duguen!*

Veradin's heart ran wild as he looked forward to the future.

"Stop your actions right now!"

Women and men armed from head to toe in the mass produced Grid set appeared in

the smithy. They were Sua and the Red Phoenix Group. This was Lauel's arrangement. The warriors who defended Pangea. Lauel had them guard the blacksmith complex since their average abilities were superior to those on the West Continent. The safety device wasn't just Faker.

"Hoh, isn't this good?"

The elite necromancers of Immortal. They were captivated by Sua's gentle eyes. Satisfy had many beautiful NPCs, but Sua was outstanding. Her beauty was at least in the top five.

"I would like to see beyond your flesh. Huhu! I want to make you into a death knight."

A necromancer started drooling. It was the 7th ranked necromancer, Drew. Sua was clearly a named NPC at first glance, so he was interested in her. Veradin nodded because he knew that Drew wasn't satisfied with his current death knight.

"Do what you want."

"Good!"

Sua was his now that permission had been given. Drew ignored the boos of the other necromancers and instructed his skeleton knight to attack Sua.

*Kiyaaaaak!*

The skeleton knight ran to Sua and wielded his sword. The skeleton knight wasn't intimidating to Sua, who had dealt with the armored needles in Pangea.

*Kieek!*

"What?"

"...!"

The necromancers' eyes widened as they saw the skeleton knight fall from the blow.

'Faker level?'

An NPC? The hidden elites of the Overgeared Kingdom! Drew identified this and

hurriedly summoned a death knight. The summoning time was short because he wasn't at Veradin's level, but it was still a death knight. It exerted a power several times stronger than the skeleton knight.

Sua judged that her opponent wasn't easy and urged the Red Phoenix members. "I'll take the vanguard. Go and rescue Khan!"

"Yes!"

It transformed into a melee. The Red Phoenix members had become several times stronger due to Asmophel's swordsmanship and they broke dozens of skeleton knights. Meanwhile, Sua tied up the feet of the death knight. Like the other Red Phoenix members, she learned Asmophel's sword techniques and was several times stronger than she was in Pangea.

Thanks to them, Faker got some breathing room and could counter Veradin's death knight. Khan was moved to a safe place and given an antidote. But Khan's poisoning wasn't completely resolved. His health was slowly declining.

Then Veradin's voice was heard. "Have you ever heard of the story of the distinguished poisoner?"

"...?"

"It was said that there was a man who slowly but thoroughly applied more than 20 types of poisons to his own body. It was for as long as 30 years. He even put poison into his bath water." The result. "The man was said to have a constitution that emitted poison when he was just breathing. He was a walking death. He wasn't just an assassin but a mass killer."

That person was here.

"My death Knight, Kyleo. It's impossible to detoxify the extreme poison that had permeated into his bones."

"..."

It wasn't a lie. Khan's poisoning wasn't relieved. Khan's life could be saved since the poison's damage wasn't high enough that it couldn't be recovered with a potion, but Khan had to suffer from terrible pain. Didn't someone say it? The pain that NPCs felt

were the same as humans in reality.

'I have to take him to Sticks.'

The sage's knowledge and wisdom would know an antidote to save Khan. Faker gave Khan some health recovery potions and rose from his seat. He took a deep breath as he stared at Kyleo while Veradin laughed.

"Are you still holding onto hope?"

Sua and the Red Phoenix Group were strong. From the time that Faker first appeared, the enemy's power surpassed Veradin's assumption. But it didn't change the results. It was because Veradin and Immortal's power was superior. Veradin was able to defeat Faker alone, while Immortal's elites were sufficient for Sua and the Red Phoenix Group. Right now, the power of both sides might seem even, but the balance would soon collapse. The moment a Red Phoenix member died, the scales would tip.

*Clack!*

Veradin moved his fingers with a relaxed mind and ordered Kyleo.

"Finish it."

*Kuweeeeeh!*

*Step, step.*

Kyleo spewed out a poisonous breath as he approached Faker. Faker was more vigilant against the illusions than the poison. Due to his assassin class, his tolerance to poison was high. But he had no compensation effect on illusions.

'Don't face the eyes.'

He avoided the line of sight and kept attacking. Those who knew the basics of combat knew not to miss the direction of the gaze. It was the same with Faker. However, this time he made an exception. The death knight's eyes flashed purple with the illusion technique as soon as it was met. Therefore, Faker deliberately ignored the eyes.

Veradin read Faker's intentions and clicked his tongue. He felt disappointed by Faker's judgment, which would make it a more unfavorable fight.

*Seokeok!*

Faker quickly fell into a crisis. While protecting Khan, Faker defended and avoided Kyleo's attacks eight out of ten times. Now he allowed most attacks.

'It will end soon.'

They wanted to harm Agnus when they were only at this level? Grid and Chris were the only ones to worry about in the Overgeared Kingdom.

"...!"

Veradin suddenly jumped with surprise.

"Moon Sting."

Faker approached in Veradin's moment of carelessness and stabbed his heart.

"Kuk...!"

The damage was close to 40,000! Faker's ultimate attack combined with Acceleration caused Veradin's vision to blink red. Veradin barely maintained his life with potions as his chest was pierced continuously with Faker's dagger. If Kyleo hadn't belately stopped it, Veradin would've turned to grey. Faker knew from the beginning. In order to fight against a necromancer, the caster had to be killed, not the slave. That's why Faker deliberately acted on the defensive to get Veradin off guard.

"This... you almost got me. The last resistance is pretty sharp."

Veradin had a wide variety of information. He knew that the number of times the Master of Swiftness could use Acceleration was extremely limited.

'I will be safe if I maintain the distance.'

Veradin summoned the Tower of Command to weaken Faker and strengthen Kyleo. Then he used Specter's Hand. It was an attack skill that caused a small amount of damage to the target as well as various debuffs. Due to Kyleo tying up his feet, Faker was hit by Specter's Hand and gradually lost power.

The battle on the side of the Red Phoenix group also wasn't good. As soon as a member

died, they turned into enemies and grabbed the ankles of their former colleagues. The balance sharply collapsed.

"Pant... pant..."

Faker's breathing was rough as he endured Kyleo's offensive. The Master of Swiftness was originally a class with bad endurance. Every time he used Acceleration, his stamina fell rapidly.

"Support Kyleo."

Was he uneasy about it taking longer than expected? Veradin summoned an additional skeleton knight. Now Faker had to deal with the death knight and skeleton knight at the same time.

"Faker..."

Behind him, Faker could hear Khan's trembling voice. He seemed to feel guilty. He was sad that people were sacrificing themselves to save him.

Faker barely blocked Kyleo's attack and moved back to Khan. There was a smile on his normally impassive face. 'This isn't your fault. Don't blame yourself.'

Khan read Faker's eyes and felt pained. Faker confirmed that Khan was drinking a health potion and focused on the battle again.

Veradin couldn't understand it.

'Isn't it pointless trying to resist?'

The battle was ending soon. Faker's resistance had no meaning. Apart from the difference in abilities, Veradin had the advantage. Veradin judged that Faker couldn't beat him.

He had considered PvP since the beginning, causing him to invest a lot of points in his stamina and achieved a high level of survival. His specs were good to quickly get rid of an assassin. After inducing the assassin to attack and consuming stamina, the death knight would be able to defeat the opponent.

Just as Veradin was making a disgusted expression.

*-An assassin fighting to defend someone is really rare. Most assassins exist for the purpose of killing people.*

"...!"

A voice was heard in Faker's ears. The origin of the voice came from Faker's shadow.

*-Yes, you're suitable for Doran's techniques.*

'Kasim...!'

Faker figured out who the owner of the voice was instantly. In this moment, he knew that a hidden quest would begin.

# Chapter 775

Muller, Pagma, Braham, Madra, Lantier, Povia, Kruger, Gis, and Alex.

The name of the nine former legends. Most players were aware of them. It was because the former legends occupied a large amount of Satisfy's worldview. But what about other legends? The legends before the previous generation? They were unknown. It was virtually impossible for a player to collect the information of all the legends in the past. It was because a person who was too far in the past wouldn't be mentioned well in history.

Pokibun, Ten, Arin... They were legends in the distant past that not much was known about. But Kasim was well aware of the former legend, Lantier. His master often told the story.

The introduction was too long. Faker avoided the attacks of the death knight Kyleo and skeleton knight while paying attention to Kasim.

"First of all, can you save Khan?"

*-My teacher also used the name Lantier.*

"...?"

*-Lantier isn't the name of an individual. It's the title given to the head of Eclipse, a shadow group that existed for over a thousand years. We... the teacher who taught Doran and I was the 32nd Lantier. Do you understand?*

*Puok!*

Kyleo's dagger was deeply embedded in Faker's shoulder. Faker was in pain but the skeleton knight protected Kyleo against his counterattacks. Kasim's explanation continued.

*-From now on, I will give you the techniques meant for a legendary assassin. Of course, it isn't complete. Many years passed and many techniques were lost.*

This strength.

*-Will it raise you to the legendary status or will you stay at the same level as me, Doran, and our teacher? It's purely up to you.*

*Chaaeng! Chaeng!*

Why was Kasim doing this? Didn't Kasim know what Khan meant to Grid? Faker grumbled about Kasim, rather than rejoicing at receiving the forerunner of a very important hidden quest. He put Khan's safety higher than his development. He wanted to stop Kasim, even if it meant not receiving the hidden quest.

"Kasim...!"

Faker urged Kasim to move.

*-Don't fret. I will arrive soon.*

Kasim's words were meaningful.

"I will compliment you on your diligence."

Veradin's voice was heard at the same time. Faker was unable to exert his full strength due to Tower of Command and was imprisoned by the skeleton knight. He sensed his death when he saw Kyleo's dagger flying.

Veradin. He had a high level of survival and dominance stat that made it hard to see him as a normal necromancer. He dealt painful despair to Faker. Faker realized it since he stabbed Veradin with Moon Sting. Veradin still had a lot of hidden power left. Veradin was several levels higher than Faker. Maybe Immortal was more terrifying than the Overgeared Kingdom thought?

'I'm sorry, Khan.'

Kyleo's dagger entered Faker's field of view. It wasn't just the shape of the blade. The snake scales embossed on the green handle were clearly marked in his eyes. Now Faker was going to die. Faker demonstrated transcendent concentration. His thinking power transcended the speed of time.

*Gulp!*

Just before the dagger stabbed between his eyes. Faker swallowed a small drug that he had inserted in the gap of his molars. It was the 'Assassin's Mindset' that he obtained from a hidden quest in the past. A person who swallowed the drug would immediately explode when they activated it, 'instantaneously' targeting the enemy within 2 meters.

However, the death penalty increased by three times. It meant that the user lost three times more experience and had a triple chance to drop items. In short, it was crazy. It was something that shouldn't be used unless the person was willing to quit the game.

However, Faker swallowed it without hesitation. It was purely to increase Khan's chances of survival. If he were to die and the death knight and skeleton knight freed, Sua and the Red Phoenix Group wouldn't be able to deal with the remaining enemies to save Khan.

Then.

*Puhahahak!*

Faker's shadow started rising like a waterfall. It was the moment when King of Shadows Kasim appeared. He used Shadow Move several times to travel from the royal palace where Lord and Irene lived and rose from Faker's back, stabbing at Kyleo with his dagger.

"Cough!"

"Awful people. You deserve this."

Faker smiled as he confirmed Kasim's appearance.

Veradin was baffled. "Who are you?"

Faker, the Red Phoenix Group, and now Kasim. Veradin gritted his teeth at the people that kept appearing.

"Don't disturb us!" Veradin screamed.

Kyleo and the skeleton knight attacked Kasim in response to Veradin's order. Kyleo was releasing more poison than before. Veradin's mana was quickly consumed. His mana potions couldn't keep up with the speed of mana consumption. This wasn't what

Veradin intended. Kyleo was running wild.

Why? Veradin still had dominance remaining. The moment the question popped into Veradin's mind.

*Chaaeng! Chaeng!*

Kasim swung his dagger just as fast as Faker and more vicious than Kyleo. Then the shadows at the feet of Kyleo and the skeleton knight rose.

*Puooook!*

*Kwajajajak!*

“What...?”

Veradin's face turned white. Kyleo's health feel sharply as he was penetrated by the shadow spear while the skeleton knight turned to ashes.

*Kiik...! Kiiing!*

Kyleo's runaway condition was getting out of control. He waved his sword randomly, speaking in an odd voice as he emitted a huge amount of poison. Why?

Kasim answered. “This guy, he still has the memory of being murdered by me?”

“...!!!”

Veradin was shocked. He knew the end of Kyleo so he finally realized Kasim's identity.

“King of Shadows!”

The strongest assassin currently in existence. His presence across all the shadows of the world was a death sentence that couldn't be avoided.

“Shadow Soldiers.”

He was as majestic as any other king with his 100,000 shadow soldiers.

“Not a target...” Veradin muttered with a confused expression. Why was such a big

monster in the Overgeared Kingdom? He shook with fear as he felt doubts. The huge smithy was already filled with hundreds of thousands of shadow soldiers.

"W-What is this?"

"Eh...? Eh eh? Aaaack!"

The screams of the necromancers belonging to Immortal rang out. The number of dead bodies increased. Kasim's shadows were a perfect counter to the necromancers who specialized in a large number of troops. The necromancers were overwhelmed with numbers and were helpless.

*Seokeok!*

*Chukakakakak!*

The dozens of ghouls and skeleton knights were shattered by the shadow swords and spears flying in all directions. In the center of the smithy covered by darkness, Kasim handed a booklet to Faker. It was a booklet containing Lantier's knowledge.

"This is what Doran inherited from Teacher. The skills couldn't be succeeded with my talent and emotions. But it might be possible for you." Kasim had been watching Faker for the several years that he guarded Lord. He saw that Faker's talent transcended himself. "For you, this power is just the beginning. First of all, go beyond Doran. And..."

Kasim's sharp eyes focused on Veradin. Veradin made a quick judgment and was running away. It was stupid. Didn't he realized he had received a death sentence he couldn't escape from?

Kasim scoffed.

"...And then succeed my skills."

The moment that Doran's skills and Kasim's skills combined, Lantier's techniques would be completed. The path to being a legend would open. Despite being a normal class player, Faker had wings as he defeated a sun grade player. But Faker pushed the joy back. He didn't even examine the contents of the hidden quest as he ran to Khan.

"I will thank you next time."

They were family living in the same house anyway. They could meet at any time. Faker lightly nodded to Kasim and took Khan to escape the smithy. He headed towards Sticks. Then Kasim...

*Puhahahak!*

Shadows appeared at Veradin's feet and immediately spread like water. Veradin used the hidden technique 'Overcoming Death' to endure Kasim's attacks several times, but it didn't make sense. It would take him 18 hours to re-summon Death Knight Kyleo, who just died. Even if Kyleo was summoned, he couldn't win.

In the end, Veradin fell to his knees and laughed. He seemed to have ulterior motives. But Kasim didn't show any interest. Veradin saw the dagger heading towards him and hurriedly shouted.

"You're going to regret killing me!"

"Why?"

Kasim finally showed some interest and Veradin explained, "Do you think I would've invaded this place without any insurance? If I die, the queen and prince might not be safe."

Of course, it was a bluff. Even Veradin wouldn't dare harm Irene or Lord. They were Grid's family, but they weren't excluded from the target list because of a moral issue. They were excluded because Veradin knew they would always be protected. But there was no reason to tell the truth. Veradin didn't want to receive the death penalty. The penalty for Veradin was different from an ordinary player.

"Really? You sent troops to Queen Irene and Prince Lord?"

"Of course. It is a power that consists of 20 death knights. If I die, then they won't be safe..."

Veradin didn't change his expression when lying, only to suddenly stop talking. It was because Kasim was laughing. He was holding his belly and laughing.

'Did I exaggerate too much?'

20 death knights was too much. It was obviously an exaggeration. He should've said

10. Veradin was uneasy.

"The 20 death knights... By now, they would've all returned to dust."

There were 200 Rebecca's Daughters candidates around Lord. Even if there really was a group of death knights, they were no match against the Rebecca's Daughters candidates. In the first place, Kasim knew that Irene and Lord were safe. That's why he came to support Faker. If there was the slightest risk, he wouldn't have left them.

*Puok!*

Kasim's blade stabbed his heart.

[You have died.]

[You have lost 32.3% experience.]

[Your death has caused all the conditions to become a Hwan Kingdom resident to be lost. You have lost all the additional effects you have obtained in the meantime. In order to get the effects back, you must meet the criteria again from the beginning.]

It was huge damage. It had been almost a year since he died. Veradin experienced the biggest frustration since Satisfy began. He missed his target, Khan, and only killed a few young blacksmiths.

At the same time, in Sticks' office.

"I need to go to the elf kingdom to obtain an antidote to cure this poison. I will hurry, so wait here."

"Isn't it faster if you bring Khan with you?"

"Many procedures are needed for a person to enter the elf kingdom. I can't help with this part."

"Please let me know the exact timing. How long will it take?"

"Six hours... no, seven hours..."

"Can't you do it sooner? Khan's pain is too great."

"...I will try."

Sticks checked Khan and hurried. He disappeared immediately with Teleport. Faker held his head. Seven hours? It meant that Khan would experience the severe pain of poisoning for the next seven hours.

Khan spoke to the saddened Faker. "I... Take me to the smithy."

# Chapter 776

There was no blood on Khan's wrinkled face. His skin was pale all the way to his fingertips. His body was a mess. It was hard to fathom his pain as he kept coughing up black blood.

"I... Take me to the smithy."

"..."

Faker wanted Khan to relax. His chances of survival were likely to increase if he was stable until Sticks came back. But Faker quickly got rid of that idea. He recalled that Khan had been working for most of his 80 years of life. Khan would feel alive when striking metal in front of a hot furnace.

"I understand."

Doing blacksmithing would help Khan become stable. Faker believed this and helped Khan. Khan leaned on his shoulder and smiled gently.

"Thank you. Thank you."

Faker's heart ached. Since when had Khan become so small? Where did his big and hard hands go, leaving only the faded hands of an old man? Time was truly cruel. Faker recalled the bond with Khan since the days of the Tzedakah Guild and worried about Grid above all else.

He knew that the sadness Grid felt would be huge compared to what Faker was feeling now.

◊ ◊ ◊

Unlike usual, the air was cold.

"..."

Khan was tearful as he returned to the empty smithy. This place had been filled with

young blacksmiths just a few hours ago. One day, they disappeared into a handful of ashes, shouting that they also wanted to support King Grid. Khan was filled with great sadness at the loss of their dreams and futures.

"Should we go back?"

Faker caught Khan's trembling body and asked with a concerned look. Khan shook his head.

"It's nothing. I will be okay."

He had a final work to do. He would go directly to the souls of the young blacksmiths and comfort them. Khan thought this and walked up to the furnace. Faker piled up hundreds of potions beside him.

"I will bring the Saintess. Don't forget to drink a potion whenever it's time."

*Nod.*

Faker confirmed Khan's answer and immediately logged out. Then he tried to contact Saintess Ruby using the emergency network. However, it was currently the moment when the PvP was over and Grid was receiving the gold medal. She couldn't be reached.

The urgent Faker tried to contact the other Overgeared members. But he couldn't get in touch with them either. Everyone was thrilled with Grid's victory and preoccupied with the celebration.

*Kwang!*

Faker slammed his fist against the wall. He continued to do this a few times until his fists were bleeding.

"...Dammit."

Faker was furious with himself. He was going to defend the Overgeared Kingdom? How could he when he couldn't even protect one elderly man?

'Why didn't I try harder?'

He realized the limits of a normal class. He knew that there were many monstrous players in the world that he didn't know yet. Nevertheless, he was satisfied and complacent with this reality. It was a terrible arrogance. He was mistaken after winning the battle against Black. A little more, he had to do a little more.

The moment that Faker held his head and sank to the floor.

*Yiing.*

His phone vibrated as it rang. His face turned rosy as he hurriedly accepted the call. It was Saintess Ruby's number.

◊ ◊ ◊

"Grandfather Khan!"

*Taang, taang.*

The sound of the hammer on the calm night was lonely today. Ruby breathed heavily as she arrived at the smithy.

"Grandfather..."

"Oh, our princess has come."

Who was the person standing in front of the flames? Khan's color was completely white as he faced the furnace. His skin remained cold despite the hot heat.

"G-Grandfather..."

Ruby started crying. The light in her big eyes, more beautiful than jewels, faded. It was Khan who loved her and took care of her like a granddaughter. To Ruby, he was like a grandfather. She believed he would love her forever and planned to always see him. But what was this haggard appearance? It seemed that they couldn't be together anymore. Ruby's chest ached as she saw Khan try to hide his pain with a cheerful expression.

"Hope! Benevolent Light! Purification!"

Ruby wanted to get rid of Khan's pain. After hurriedly using heal, she used a cleansing

spell to heal his abnormalities.

[You have healed the target.]

[The target is old. His body has reached its limits.]

[The recovery effect isn't applied properly.]

[The detoxification effect isn't applied properly.]

"...!"

In the process of doing good deeds, Ruby had saved many lives. She believed that she could save more people in the future and give them happiness. Yet she couldn't save a precious person. Ruby was shocked since she never doubted the power of a Saintess.

"P-Purif... Purification! Purification!"

Ruby had a short playing experience with Satisfy. She was unfamiliar with the concept of NPCs. She couldn't accept reality and continued to use the skill. Khan placed a hand over her head.

"Please calm down."

"G-Grandfather..."

"I'm sorry. I'm giving pain to our princess because I'm too old. Haha."

"Uh...!"

Ruby fell into Khan's arms. Khan's always hot body was exceptionally cold today. Khan patted her trembling back.

"Don't be in too much pain. There's no need to be sad. My grandson has become a wonderful adult and king. Princess Ruby, who was just a girl, is becoming a respectable adult. It's time for this old man to return to the earth."

"Grandfather...! Grandfather! Wahh!"

Ruby eventually started sobbing. She always had a gentle and calm appearance because she was conscious of her great responsibility as a Saintess, but she was still just a girl.

Khan took a deep breath and said, "Huhu, don't be sad. I should leave when my natural life span ends. Instead, you should celebrate... Cough! Cough cough!"

Khan's health gauge dropped dramatically. His symptoms of poisoning were getting worse.

"Grandfather!"

Faker returned as Ruby was crying out in shock. He brought the priests who had just returned from an expedition.

"I pray to the Goddess of Light."

"Give peace to your son."

The priests gathered their hands and started praying. It was the manifestation of the ultimate healing spell Light Prayer, where 17 or more Rebecca priests chanted a prayer. But even that didn't work on Khan.

A priest approached Faker and said cautiously, "It's time to leave."

"What are you saying? We have to save him for the next four hours, just four hours."

Sticks would return in four hours. No, it could be faster. The sage's wisdom would surely save Khan. The priest quietly turned away from Faker's eyes, which were full of firm belief. It was an attitude that said he believed Faker's faith was a futile hope.

"Not yet... I still have work to do."

Khan wiped away the blood at his mouth, let go of the crying Ruby and rose. He approached the anvil in front of the furnace. An armor was placed on the anvil. It was plate armor with no visible gaps for a sword or spear to pierce. The gold rings and hinges connecting the black iron plates and the red buckle were all delicately crafted. It was armor with an excellent design. It focused on the safety of the wearer without any restrictions on movements.

“Just a bit more...”

“...”

*Taang, taang, taang.*

Ruby and Faker didn't stop Khan. He put a new iron plate on the armor and started hammering again. Connect the hinges, connect the rings, and do it again. Khan looked at his armor with warm eyes and diligently worked. It was hard to believe he had been affected by the pain of the poisoning not long ago.

“...He's a true craftsman.”

“I admire...”

The priests marvelled in trembling voices. Their attitude towards Khan was just as reverent as when they prayed in front of Rebecca's statue. How much time passed?

“Hu... huhu.”

In the latter half of the work, Khan suddenly burst out laughing. He suddenly realized it. An armor with gold and red details. This color, wasn't it precisely to Grid's taste? He put a new iron plate on the armor while desperately praying to see his king wear it once.

“...Cough!”

“Grandfather!”

Khan coughed out blood again as he was bringing a health potion to his mouth. A large amount of blood soaked the floor. Throughout the work, Ruby and the priests' heals wrapped around Khan's body. But it was useless.

‘It's time to send him off.’

Faker was forced to accept reality as he saw Khan's health gauge. There was one-tenth left and it was slowly dwindling.

‘Grid.’

Faker was nervous. Grid should've received the news by now and Faker hoped that Grid would come quickly. Grid needed time to say farewell to Khan.

'Please come.'

Come quickly Grid. The moment Faker's heart was become more and more tense.

*Ttaaang!*

"...!"

Faker, Ruby and the dozens of priests were all shocked. It was because their souls rang as Khan's hammer connected to the armor.

"O-Ohhh..."

"Khan..."

Sounds of admiration flowed from everywhere. Even an outsider could tell. At this moment, Khan had reached a new ground.

*Ttaang... taang... taang...*

"..."

Khan's hammering sound, which had captured everyone's soul, died down and suddenly ended. Khan had hardly any health left. At that moment.

[A new legendary blacksmith has been born!]

[Every blacksmith in the world will look up to him and praise him!]

Five seconds.

All players currently accessing Satisfy had this notification window rise in front of them. A world message.

Then.

"Pant! Pant! Khan!!"

Grid came running.

Three seconds.

Without sparing a moment to breathe, he looked at Khan with a devastated expression.

"You came."

One second.

Khan smiled with pleasure and opened his arms. Grid jumped into his arms as Khan started to turn to grey.

# Chapter 777

“Khan!!”

As Khan turned to grey, Grid hugged him like he didn’t want to miss a single part.

“You must be happy.”

Khan wanted to say a lot but there was no time. Khan only left a single wish as his testament.

*Swaah.*

Finally, Khan’s two hands that wanted to hold Grid completely disappeared before they could wrap around Grid. Khan smiled brightly rather than showing any sorrow. It was Khan’s last appearance that would forever be kept in Grid’s mind.

“Khannnnn!”

Grid didn’t want to lose Khan’s touch, body temperature, and smell that was disappearing like a mirage. He eagerly stretched out a hand but it was useless. His hands only touched the air that had nothing left.

“Oppa...”

Tears constantly flowed from Ruby’s eyes as she watched the last farewell between Grid and Khan. Faker supported her as her nose turned red from crying.

“Let’s leave Grid alone.”

◊ ◊ ◊

The first person who acknowledged him. The person who shared his sufferings, sorrows, and joy. Khan was his teacher, disciple, friend, and family member. He was always at the forefront when Grid was thinking about his ‘precious people’ in his head.

“Kkuk...”

The empty smithy. Now in the place where there was no more Khan, Grid stared at the air with dry eyes before grabbing his chest and collapsing. How many hours passed since Khan left? He thought he had no more tears left but they once again flowed.

"...Terrible old man." Grid cried with his head on the floor and finally opened his mouth for the first time. His cracked voice echoed through the empty smithy. "Didn't you say you wouldn't leave until you got all my skills? Then why... why did you break your promise? Huh? You bad..."

Bad person. Grid complained before stopping. He was worried that the gods were listening to him and might misunderstand, dropping Khan into hell.

"..."

Time flowed in the void. Grid felt a deep grudge as he looked at the smithy covered with traces of Khan. He felt bitter towards himself. Why didn't he protect Khan? Why couldn't he arrive a bit sooner?

"We spent 10 long years together." Grid felt signs of someone being around and said, "But the time to say goodbye was only one second."

How sad and lonely was Khan? Grid shouted 'father' and 'grandfather' in his heart but failed to show filial piety. He couldn't even be there properly at the end.

Lael comforted Grid, who couldn't raise his head. "To Khan, that one second would be like an eternity. He wouldn't have been lonely. He was happy to be able to see you."

13 hours and 23 minutes after Khan's death. Lael had been doing his job while Grid was mourning.

"I used our information network to identify the members of Immortal. I'm investigating the radius and base of their activities, so please give a killing order."

They dared to invade the Overgeared Kingdom and hurt Grid's family and friends. Putting aside Grid, there was no forgiveness from the position of the Overgeared Kingdom. Lael and the Overgeared members were ready to rain hell down on the Immortal members. They planned to trample on Immortal so that they would live in regret while suffering forever.

"In addition, Khan's funeral will be a state funeral in consideration for his

achievements in life. His contribution to the development of the nation's economy and military power was huge. And..."

Lauel shut his mouth for a moment while giving the report. He took a deep breath, calmed his trembling heart and opened his mouth again.

"The new legendary blacksmith who emerged... you guessed it, but it was Khan."

He could be sure because the world message appeared the moment that Khan died. Khan hammered the iron to the end and became a legend only after he died. He might be a legend that existed for only a moment, but his feats would be forever. Lauel would make sure of it.

"The exact cause of death is natural causes, not the poisoning."

A legend had a passive that caused resistance to all status conditions and five seconds of immortality. If Khan was in a normal state, the poison would've disappeared the moment he became a legend and his health should've remained fixed at the minimum. But that didn't happen. Based on the testimonies of Faker, Ruby, and the priests, Khan had reached the end of his life.

"It's fortunate. Khan could leave without any pain."

In addition, he was able to meet with Grid thanks to the legend's five seconds of immortality. Lauel hoped to slightly ease Grid's mind but instead, Grid's anger soared to the limit. His expression distorted and he said in a shaky voice, "His life span might've been shortened because of the poison."

"..."

"Even if that wasn't the case, Khan had to endure the pain of the poisoning."

Khan was poisoned for several hours in an elderly state. As a player, Grid couldn't fathom the pain and fear that Khan would've felt. Khan, who lived in sorrow after losing his wife and son. Grid was infinitely sad that he suffered even at the last minute.

"Immortal..."

Grid's body shook with uncontrollable anger. He didn't say anything special. He just clenched his fists. He needed more time to control his mind.

"I will make the arrangements."

Lael bowed his head and turned around. He was currently acting on Grid's behalf and had no time to stay here. He had to move quickly.

'Looking at the state of the king, I think I should prepare to move the army.'

Lael predicted that Grid would go on a frenzy. Grid wouldn't be satisfied with a simple kill order and would slaughter Immortal by moving his entire army. Of course, this wasn't a good development. It was the worst. War consumed soldiers, food, and an astronomical amount of supplies. If they fought a war with the necromancers of Immortal, the Overgeared Kingdom would suffer huge losses.

'Veradin, you son of a bitch. Causing this incident during the time when there is a truce with the empire.'

Lael planned to increase the national power of the Overgeared Kingdom by more than 20% during the armistice with the empire. Instead, it would become a negative. At the end of the armistice period, it would become more difficult to deal with the empire. Lael's eyes were dark. He felt powerless as he headed to the exit.

Behind him, Grid was rising from his spot. The full plate armor on top of Khan's anvil belatedly caught his attention. Khan's posthumous work. Grid approached the armour and his eyes widened as he gripped it with trembling hands.

[Valhalla of Infinite Affection]

Rating: Secret

Durability: ??? Defense: ???

Options: ???

An armor containing the hidden story of the 2nd legendary blacksmith Grid and the 3rd legendary blacksmith Khan.

\* Only 'Grid' can check the detailed information of the item.

[You are Grid.]

[The item information will be updated.]

*Ttiring~*

[Valhalla of Infinite Affection]

Rating: Secret

Durability: 1,721/1,721

Defense: 1,410

\* 20% increase in health recovery.

\* 40% reduction in damage from physical attacks and magic attacks.

\* Immunity to instant death and assassination skills.

\* Maintains the body temperature.

\* If you are in a party, defense will increase depending on the number of party members.

\* Defense will increase every time the armor durability falls.

\* Magic defense +300.

\* When you get hit, there is a high probability of emitting the 'Distinguished Poisoner's Poison.'

\* Passive skill 'Immune to Ten Thousand Poisons' will be generated.

\* Passive skill 'Moving Fortress' will be generated.

An armor produced by the legendary blacksmith Khan while wishing for Grid's safety. It is filled with Khan's caring, affection, and devotion, and covered in poison. It is a

work based on Valhalla, the masterpiece of Blacksmith Albatino which gave deep inspiration to Pagma.

The performance is beyond the original and there is room to become a myth depending on the wearer's actions.

Weight: 3,980

Conditions of Use: Grid.

"Khan..."

Grid was able to see at a glance how much care and skills Khan put into this armor. He noticed it was designed solely for himself. In the end.

"I'm sorry... I'm sorry Khan."

Grid once again cried in sorrow. He was a sinner. Why didn't he give any presents to Khan? If Grid had given him such a wonderful gift, Khan's fate might've changed. Grid realized how indifferent he was to Khan and felt guilty. He vowed to do better with his family in the future.

*-Prepare for a news conference.*

Grid calmed down and sent a whisper to Lauel.

*-Huh? Press conference?*

Lauel was stunned since he had been expecting Grid to say that he was going to find Veradin and Agnus right now. Grid explained to him.

*-Denounce Immortal, who invaded another kingdom during the National Competition and caused enormous damage.*

*.... Are you planning to move public opinion through the media?*

*-Yes.*

The continent was wide. It was practically impossible for the Overgeared members to

search and punish the Immortal members scattered everywhere. Of course, they could kill a few people. However, that was it. The efficiency was too low.

*-Thus, I will borrow other hands. I am going to give a kill command on Immortal to all two billion players.*

'I know that I can't move the army.'

Grid was filled with anger and sadness but he analyzed the situation calmly. It was a king's attitude. Lauel honestly admired it, but he felt negatively about moving public opinion.

Immortal's raid and Khan's death. It was a big disaster and source of grief for the Overgeared Kingdom, but the death of an NPC was just a small incident to a third party playing the game. Wouldn't Grid condemning Immortal just cause ridicule? In particular, Grid had obtained huge rewards from this year's National Competition. The many people jealous of him were likely to ridicule and criticize him.

*-I think there's nothing to gain if we use the media. Even if you denounce Immortal, it's just someone else's story. It is rare for players to act.*

Lauel replied honestly.

*-You're mistaken.*

*-....?*

*-I'm not trying to use the media to ask people to cooperate. I want to advertise.*

*-Advertise...?*

*-Yes. After justifying why I am going after Immortal at the press conference, I will publicize that I will make an item for the players every time they hunt a member of Immortal.*

*-....*

It was a sure way. The moment Grid's advertisement spread to the world, two billion people would become Immortal hunters. The people who would look for Immortal would grow like bamboo shoots and Immortal would be exposed to infinite PK

without room to breathe.

However, this meant that Grid would be paying a lot. Making items for hundreds, maybe even tens of thousands of hunters would empty his pockets.

*-... How can you afford it?*

Lael talked about a realistic problem and Grid immediately responded.

*-I have a lot of money.*

Grid's assets had been steadily accumulating since selling the Red Phoenix Bow to Jishuka and he expressed his resolve.

*-It doesn't matter if I become broke. I will make those Immortal dogs quit the game. This is a command.*

Now it wasn't just items. Grid was learning how to take advantage of his wealth and position.

# Chapter 778

Changes started happening.

"You want a job? Aren't you a necromancer? Tsk, find a job elsewhere."

"Are you joking? Where on earth would a Necromancer's Guild reject a necromancer?"

"Where? Here! Get lost!"

"This is crazy...!"

The Fold Kingdom. The little kingdom currently belonged to the Overgeared Kingdom, but was formerly a tributary of the Saharan Empire. It had a terrible history as every time the king was replaced in a civil war, tens of thousands of casualties would occur. The reason was the intervention of the Saharan Empire. The empire would confuse the succession to the throne by supporting and inciting princes lacking intelligence. Therefore, the Fold Kingdom had a bloody history whenever the kingship was changed.

Was that the reason? The Fold Kingdom was a bleak land where dozens of ghosts filled with grudges roamed. Undead monsters and ghosts could be found all over the place. This was why necromancers called Fold Kingdom a treasure island. For necromancers who could make undead, the Fold Kingdom was close to an ideal residence.

At least until yesterday.

"I'm going crazy. No NPCs are giving quests."

"It's happening to me as well. The attitude of the NPCs has changed overnight. The intimacy that we have accumulated so far is useless."

"Is it a bug? Does it make sense that the Necromancer's Guild doesn't give quests to necromancers?"

"It isn't a bug. I have already contacted customer service."

Three days after the end of the 3rd National Competition. The necromancers couldn't receive quests anywhere in Fold Kingdom. Even the basic facilities such as restaurants and inns couldn't be used. They were treated with outright hostility by the people. The necromancers were assaulted or deported after being questioned. The necromancers seemed to be persecuted on a kingdom level.

The water clan people in the Siren Kingdom was even worse.

"A necromancer? Clarify your affiliation."

"Huh? Why?"

"Just do it! Ah! This guy is from Immortal! Arrest him immediately!"

"H-Hik!"

The soldiers forced the necromancers visiting Siren to reveal their affiliation. If they found a necromancer belonging to Immortal, the necromancer was arrested immediately and locked in prison for a week. There were a few necromancers killed while resisting arrest.

Why did this happen overnight? The confusion of the necromancers grew.

[I strongly condemn Immortal, who invaded the Overgeared Kingdom during the National Competition and caused enormous damage. We will never forgive those who caused material and personal damage to us, causing us to suffer a great deal of emotional suffering. I ask for many people to support us.]

Grid held a press conference in Seoul, Korea and attracted worldwide attention. Immortal found out that Grid was behind this, while ordinary necromancer players blamed Immortal. Immortal was split into factions. There was a suggestion that Veradin and his followers should take responsibility.

Veradin calmed his furious colleagues.

"The impact on us is actually very minimal. We'll be safe if we avoid working in the range of influence of the Overgeared Kingdom, such as the Fold Kingdom and Siren."

"Isn't the biggest problem the fact that we can't act in the Fold Kingdom?"

"There are many hunting grounds on the continent that are more ideal than the Fold Kingdom. Have you neglected to collect information?"

"Ick...! Ignore the intimacy we have built up in the Fold Kingdom in the meantime? What the hell is this? Many people have suffered because of what you have done!"

"Do I have to apologize? Why? Aren't we an organization created to help Agnus build the Kingdom of the Dead? The reason I invaded the Overgeared Kingdom is to weaken the power of the Overgeared Kingdom that might interfere with the construction of Agnus' kingdom. It's an action for the future of all of us. Why should I be blamed?"

"..."

"In the National Competition, Grid succeeded in attracting Panmir. At this time, the production of items in the Overgeared Kingdom will get out of the control. Therefore, we invaded the smithies and succeeded in hitting them. Is my behavior really worthy of criticism?"

"..."

Everyone became mute. The Immortal members could no longer blame Veradin. They struggled as a result, but his intentions couldn't be blamed. Whatever the truth was, the justification was too good. Veradin confirmed that the atmosphere had calmed down and spoke.

"Once again, there's no need to be afraid of the Overgeared Kingdom. We just need to move away from the influence of the Overgeared Kingdom. While the Overgeared Kingdom is trying to catch up, we will reserve our power and set up the foundations of our kingdom."

Veradin was confident. There was a limit to the manpower Grid could invest to catch them. The Overgeared Kingdom searching for Immortal was no different from looking for a needle in the desert.

As everyone was relieved by Veradin's idea, the 2nd ranked necromancer, Bullet, spoke. "How will the normal necromancers handle this?"

The innocent necromancers were receiving damage because of Immortal. Many necromancers were suppressed and lost their places in the Overgeared Kingdom. In particular, the Fold Kingdom was very important for low and medium level users.

"There is a possibility that they will vent their anger by cooperating with the Overgeared Kingdom."

This was Bullet's concern.

"No. The necromancers can't be hostile to us. If they're hostile to us, they know that Agnus won't let them in his kingdom in the future. In the first place, they're being suppressed by Grid. Their anger will naturally be directed towards Grid." Veradin didn't feel that this situation was very serious. In his head, the damage was only one person's death.

But what happened was more catastrophic than he expected.

"Kukuk, you guys. What the hell did you do alone? Huh? Weaklings. Kukuk!"

The door of the meeting room opened without permission and a man appeared. It was Agnus. Veradin and everyone present jumped up and bowed. Agnus sat on the windowsill, leaving the table for Veradin.

"Grid has placed a bounty on Immortal for all players in the world."

"Huh?"

"He will make an item for every Immortal member killed? Kukuk, kikikik!"

"What...?!!"

Veradin and the Immortal members paled. None of them imagined that Grid would extend his reach to the world, rather than staying in the Overgeared Kingdom. It was the same with the smart Veradin.

'Giving items as a reward?'

There was a limit to the funds. Veradin thought that Grid was bluffing since the financial situation of the Overgeared Kingdom wasn't very good. He couldn't imagine the assets that Grid got from selling the Red Phoenix Bow to Jishuka.

"In the first place, will there be many people who respond to Grid? The reason for invading during the National Competition is purely Grid's fault. He couldn't fully defend himself and is now using other people to do his work. It must be seen

negatively by the masses."

Agnus explained to Veradin who was denying reality. "Have you forgotten that Grid defeated Kraugel?"

"...?"

"Kilkik! Don't you know the power of a symbol? Right now, Grid is the best."

"Ah..."

Veradin belatedly realized. The present Grid was a person who received the envy and longing of millions of people. There were countless people sending absolute favors to Grid and one word from Grid had a great deal of power. Grid could easily move the masses.

Agnus whispered in the ears of the pale Veradin. "I don't know what mischief you are up to but... This time the opponent isn't doing what you want. Right? Kukuk!"

*Flinch.*

Veradin was startled. He could perceive distrust in Agnus' words. Agnus, who had showed absolute trust in Veradin so far, was actually distrustful? Agnus saw Veradin's confusion and clicked his tongue.

"Do you think I am a fool? A few months ago, you told me to absolutely avoid conflicts with the Overgeared Kingdom. Now you suddenly changed your mind and invaded the Overgeared Kingdom. Did you think I would have no doubts? Huh?"

Agnus gripped Veradin's thin shoulders with great strength. A necromancer wasn't strength based so Agnus' strong grip caused Veradin's face to distort.

"You won against Faker? You? Kukuk! What's your identity?"

"That, I think you are misunderstanding something..."

"Shut up."

"..."

"I don't care what you have in mind. I don't care if you stab me in the back later. Why? You won't be able to do anything to me anyway."

"..."

Veradin faced Agnus' golden eyes and realized.

"Keep one thing in mind. You can do what you like was long as you keep providing conveniences to me like a dog. Work like a dog in moderation. I won't abandon you as long as you're useful."

Agnus wasn't crazy. His emotions were just intense, sometimes making him seem crazy. In fact, Veradin was suspicious from the beginning. Agnus was acting with such a clear sense of purpose that he couldn't be a simple madman. Thus, Veradin was interested and decided to observe from the side. But Veradin didn't know he was such a bad guy.

'I have been dancing on top of his palm?'

Veradin gritted his teeth.

"Then what will you do now? I don't care what happens to Immortal, so should I just sit on the sidelines? Or should I fight Grid as you wish? Take your pick. I only want to have fun."

"...For the moment, I think it is better to take shelter in the empire and receive the protection of the empress."

The wicked Veradin came up with a realistic countermeasure. He was forced to abandon his first plan of pushing Agnus into a corner and seeing his madness amplify. It was highly likely that Agnus' distrust would skyrocket if he was forced into a meaningless fight. Veradin believed that they should lay low until the public's interest in Immortal eased.

But would they be safe with the empress? Like everyone else, he couldn't measure the scale of two billion players. In addition, he didn't know how persistent Grid was. Grid's tenacity once he had a clear purpose was close to madness. It was more than Agnus' insanity, which occurred when pursuing fun to forget reality.

"Gather the insane dragon iron."

Grid gave an order after receiving information that Immortal was hiding in the empire.

# Chapter 779

Kill Immortal!

The press conference held by Grid because of a personal grudge contained serious moral issues. Not only did Grid declare that he would destroy a force who caused him damage, he also asked for people's cooperation. It was obviously revenge. Grid was like an absolute tyrant as he wielded the power of his position. This gave a physiological rejection to the public.

It was a press conference that should gain criticism, rather than public approval. But Grid's press conference received huge support from the masses. It was thanks to the screenplay written with money.

"I understand that the Overgeared Kingdom has suffered tremendous damage. But in the end, isn't it just a quarrel between two forces? What relationship does it have with the world? Why should other people join in the Overgeared Kingdom's revenge?"

"It's for the future of the National Competition. If I don't condemn Immortal, who invaded another power during the National Competition, there's likely to be a second and third Immortal in the future. From next year, the forces that will be damaged during the National Competition will get out of control."

"Um... then the participation rate of rankers in the National Competition will fall?"

The National Competition had become a world festival. There was a joke that people waited one year for the National Competition. The public didn't want a National Competition that only involved second and third advancement users.

"That's correct. If you enjoy watching the National Competition, then you shouldn't let Immortal set this precedent. I believe that we should thoroughly punish Immortal so that a force that will abuse our National Competition won't appear again."

"Are you saying that the Overgeared Kingdom is punishing Immortal for the sake of the public, rather than a private grudge?"

"Yes, that's right."

There might be more than 200 reporters gathered at the press conference, but Grid only received the questions of 20 people. They were reporters bribed by Lauel. The 20 reporters asked questions favorable to Grid. They ignored the violence of revenge, which was a matter to be taken seriously. Thanks to the questions asked by the reporters, the Overgeared Kingdom's desire for revenge was covered by a good packaging.

"Excuse me, wait a minute. In the cause of Immortal, they invaded the Overgeared Kingdom to stop the expansion of power. Isn't this an acceptable strategy? Don't you think it is too much to want to completely destroy Immortal?"

"In the process of suppressing Immortal, you caused great damage to ordinary necromancer players. How is that..."

"Raise your hand if you want to ask a question. Reporter on this side, please ask."

*Buzz buzz.*

Grid ignored the reporters who asked common sense questions. No matter how much they raised their hands, Grid only received questions from reporters bought in advance.

'How blatant!'

As the press conference proceeded in Grid's good direction, the suspicions of the reporters grew and were soon confirmed. They realized that Grid's press conference was a show and they were just bridesmaids. Some of the reporters were furious and tried to make a disturbance. Grid sprinkled bait like he had been waiting. It was bait to fool the angry reporters and the public at once.

"I will make items for those who contribute to protecting the future of the National Competition by joining the Immortal Hunting."

"Is it the mass produced Grid set commonly found in the Overgeared Kingdom?"

"No. It's more special. I will guarantee that the items will have at least an epic rating. As a token of my appreciation, I will pay for the materials."

"...!"

A chance to get a free item made by Grid! The reporters couldn't miss this scoop. They dropped their doubts for a moment and started to focus on the reward articles. The public's attention was focused on the compensation.

"This press conference is finished. I thank you for your participation."

By the end of the one hour press conference, Grid was presented as the 'apostle of justice' that condemned Immortal in order to protect the rights of the public and a popular event. Corrupt media and sweet capital combined to give a sweet Cola.

"Is it okay?" After the press conference. Toon looked at Grid in the back seat and asked anxiously.

Grid seemed uncomfortable. He seemed to feel remorse for buying the media and deceiving the public.

Grid smiled bitterly. "I'm fine. Don't you know? I'm originally a bad guy."

Even if he was a good guy, he would become corrupted for Khan's revenge. Grid's fists shook.

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"I watched the press conference. You did very well."

Blur the issue and focus on justice. This was the advice Lauel gave him and Grid carried it out earnestly. The reporters bought by Lauel helped a lot.

"Why are you praising me? I just read from the script written by Huroi in the movie you staged."

"Doesn't the completion of the movie depend on the actor's performance?"

"..."

Grid closed his mouth. He felt uneasy that his face was getting thicker. He was worried that he would become a rotten person like the politicians he saw in the news and movies. Lauel smiled at the anxious Grid.

"Politicians are very clever. Don't worry. It's unlikely that you will be like them."

"...That's good."

Grid was reassured by the answer and smiled at Lauel. Grid belatedly noticed that Lauel was trying to make a bright smile.

'My face is too stiff.'

He tried to relax. Friends were truly good. Just like Khan.

"Don't worry too much. I'm not feeling bad."

Grid sat on a chair and pulled out the main point.

"Immortal is hiding in the empire like you predicted?"

"Yes. They probably won't come out for the time being."

The empire's infrastructure was the best on the continent. From the hunting grounds and quests to the facilities, everything was perfect. There were some inconveniences from the large population. However, there was nothing wrong with staying in the empire for a lifetime.

"Moreover, Immortal belongs to the empire. They will be treated generously in the empire."

"They will enjoy themselves?"

"Yes. But they will suffer from a constant threat. It's because the players in the empire will be watching Immortal. The moment they step somewhere by mistake, they will receive the surprise attack of an assassin!"

This threat would continue. It was terrible from Immortal's viewpoint. However, Grid wasn't comforted. Grid wanted Immortal's utter ruin. In particular, Grid couldn't tolerate Veradin, who dealt direct suffering onto Khan, as well as Agnus behind him.

"I have to visit the empire."

"You plan to infiltrate and assassinate by yourself?"

"Is it possible?"

"It's impossible. After Your Majesty abducted Sir Asmophel, the empire's defense facilities were upgraded. The search magic will find you even if you wear the invisibility cloak."

Of course, the remote regions of the empire could be crossed freely. However, Immortal was likely to be based in the imperial palace. It would be impossible for Faker's grandfather to safely infiltrate the imperial palace. Then what about Grid? There was no way.

"...Don't tell me?"

Lauel was amazed as he was showing a negative reaction. It was because he saw the ends of Grid's mouth curving up.

"You intend to openly go?"

Grid maintained his composure after Khan's death. He showed a wonderful and cool appearance at the press conference. That's why Lauel was caught off guard. He forgot that the current Grid wasn't sane.

"Don't worry. I'm still holding on tightly to my spirit."

Grid reassured the worried Lauel and gave an order.

"Send a letter to the empire. The Overgeared King Grid will officially pay them a visit."

The master of the West Continent was the Saharan Empire. Grid was supposed to visit the emperor and give greetings as soon as he built a kingdom. But he refused and was oppressed by the empire.

"During the truce... I will use this opportunity to meet the emperor."

The fact that the empire proposed a truce agreement with the Overgeared Kingdom proved that the Overgeared Kingdom couldn't be ignored. Grid believed that he wouldn't be insulted if he visited the empire at this time. He judged it was an appropriate time to find out what type of person the emperor was. Lauel read Grid's thoughts and was thrilled.

"I wanted to tell you to visit the empire once after the truce. But I couldn't say it because I thought you would be unhappy."

If Grid visited the empire and gave a good impression, the duration of the armistice might increase.

"But..." Lauel suddenly had a doubt. "What are you going to say to the emperor? Will you ask him to hand over Immortal?"

"I'm not a fool. Should I bow down only to be rejected?"

"Phew."

It was fortunate that he wasn't a 'fool' anymore. Lauel felt relief.

"I'll be in the smithy working on the insane dragon iron. Gather all the workmen and sculptors of the Overgeared Kingdom together. Ah, there's also the merchant ranker called Muto. Tell him I want to make a deal."

Grid gave meaningful commands. Lauel grasped Grid's intentions and immediately nodded.

"I understand."

Lauel's heart thumped in his chest. He noticed that Grid's intelligence was in the process of development as he learned to use everything in the environment as well as the individual's armed forces.

'It's like looking at a chimpanzee.'

Primates such as chimpanzees were relatively uneasy. But innate intelligence alone couldn't make them smart. They had to learn how to use the tools and environment to become smarter. Just like the Grid of the past. This could sum up the present Grid.

"The stage of maturity..." (*TL: Maturity can also be hard-boiled egg*)

"What? Why are you suddenly talking about an egg?"

"..."

Lauel, who was muttering with a happy face, looked like he was waking up.

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"From now on, make ornaments out of the insane dragon iron. The more you have, the better. However, don't think about making it roughly. I can't give it as a gift if the artistry isn't high."

"Yes. But I think it will be too difficult to craft."

"I will help. White, make a large number of needles with the insane dragon iron."

"Needles?"

"Yes. No matter how solid the wall, won't it break if needles are inserted in? Teach it to the blacksmith called Panmir"

"Yes, I understand."

The smithy complex in the center of Reinhardt regained its vitality for the first time since Khan's death. A large number of workers gathered and Grid watched them while burning with motivation.

'Just wait. I will go and kill you many times. '

It was fortunate that Immortal was hiding in the empire. This opportunity allowed him to deal a severe blow to a future enemy. Grid's way of thinking was colder than ever.

# Chapter 780

"The kingdom built by a blacksmith!"

The 1st ranked blacksmith, Panmir, was very excited when coming to the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was because the smithy complex contained large-scale smithies reminiscent of the dwarf city of Talima. The sound of hammering rang out around the clock, the smoke rose from every chimney, the scorching heat and the smell of steel...

This was truly a blacksmith's paradise. A heaven made by a blacksmith for blacksmiths!

'If I work here, my efficiency will rise sharply!'

A blacksmith's heart knew blacksmiths well. Panmir admired the rational smithy structure and felt great pleasure. He could see how much consideration Grid put into the process of designing the smithy. Panmir's ambition surpassed fullness and ascended into heaven.

"Is this the first smithy?"

After touring the smithies, Panmir moved to the smithy that would be his workplace in the future. He was so happy that his steps were light.

"Make way!"

"Hmm?"

Panmir, who was humming while walking down the street, paused and looked back. There was a parade of people carrying huge flour bags that were over 100kg on their backs. Panmir frowned.

'Slaves?'

The people burdened by flour bags were walking like ducks. It seemed very painful as they were sweating while covered in dirt. Someone couldn't endure it and fell down along the way. But he immediately jumped up like he was afraid and ran with the heavy bags.

"Huh... truly harsh."

It was hard to see blatant slavery in the empire. Even the empire, which slaughtered thousands of minorities, didn't treat slaves harshly, at least in the eyes of the people. It was presumed to be the arrangement of the S.A. Group in consideration of the players' emotions. However, there was such a terrible sight in the kingdom that a player had set up.

"It's hard to understand."

Why didn't Grid set a limit on slavery? Panmir tried to understand but it wasn't easy.

"Huh?"

Panmir shook his head and was about to leave this place, only to feel amazed. It was because he found a familiar person in the procession of slaves. Aura Master Hurent.

'Hurent?'

Hurent was one of the strongest representatives of the United States. He was a big player who maintained the one digit ranking for years. Many Americans missed him at the 2nd National Competition. Every time the National Competition came around, the Americans had a habit of saying 'If only there was Hurent...'

Many people were looking forward to Hurent's brilliant return and it was the same for Panmir. Panmir had been looking forward to reuniting with Hurent once he emerged from his training. Now at this moment, he was reunited with an unimaginable figure in an unexpected place.

'Is Hurent a slave?'

Panmir was hallucinating. It was clear that he had seen wrong. Panmir rubbed his eyes and denied reality. But when he looked back a few times, the slave really was Hurent. He was suffering more than any other slave. He was walking like a duck with six large bags of flour.

"U-Unbelievable! Hurent! What are you doing here?!"

Panmir couldn't stand it and ran to Hurent. Hurent's face was scruffy and he was covered with dirt. Was this the gentleman who looked like a middle-aged noble in

Britain and was loved by women?

"W-What is going on? Why are you living in slavery?"

"Panmir...?" Hurent recognized Panmir and laughed. "No, how did you know me after seeing me once? Other people thought I just had the same name."

"How can I not recognize you? You're the buyer of the first epic rated weapon that I made!"

"Haha... Yes, there was something like that."

Hurent looked tired at first glance. Panmir was able to get a glimpse of how hard Hurent had been living if he kept having to do hard labor like this.

"How did you come here? Why did you become a slave?"

"What are you saying? I'm not a slave."

"Then?"

"A farmer."

"What...?"

"I was doing field work in Bairan. Today we are carrying out the mission of transporting the food grown in Bairan to Reinhardt."

"Field work...? Move food...?"

"This isn't a procession of slaves but a procession of farmers."

"Eek! You are crazy right now!"

Even if Hurent's words were true, Panmir refused to accept it. A one digit ranker representing a nation, why was the hidden class Aura Master suddenly a farmer? And what farmer carried so many flour bags weighing hundreds of kilograms? It was even at a duck pace! Where was the cart? The madman Hurent whispered to Panmir.

"Don't worry. This is training."

"Training?"

"Yes. I'm currently living as a farmer in the Overgeared Kingdom to become stronger. But please don't spread any rumors. This practice shouldn't be known to the world."

"..."

This completely crazy bastard. Or maybe Panmir was being deceived by a cheater. Panmir was at a loss for words.

"Adios."

Hurent said goodbye and carried the flour bags on his back again. Then he chased after the procession with duck-like steps.

"...He's out of his mind in the peak of his life. *Tsk tsk tsk.*"

This was the time when the expression 'the end' was used. It was truly regrettable for the United States to lose a big star. Panmir gave a deep sigh and moved with heavy footsteps. The person waiting for him at the first smithy was a blacksmith with black skin. His name...

'White?'

Why was a black-skinned NPC named White?

'What is this hobby?'

Panmir had felt deeply uncomfortable since he saw Hurent. The Overgeared Kingdom started to seem strange.

"Are you Panmir?"

"That's right..."

"It's nice to meet you. I'm Blacksmith White. Since Master Grid has instructed me to educate you, I will bestow my skills onto you from today on. Let's make needles."

"What?"

Panmir frowned. Who was this person? He was first in the blacksmith rankings and learnt how to make ego items at the dwarf city of Talima. He was even recognized by the emperor and appointed as deputy chief blacksmith of the empire. Even the older people of the empire, the arrogant blacksmiths, acknowledged him because he knew how to make ego items.

In other words, Panmir was one of the best blacksmiths. Panmir was confident that there were few blacksmiths better than him on the whole continent. Yet a young blacksmith around 40 years old seemed to think he would teach Panmir.

'I even have to make needles?'

He moved to the Overgeared Kingdom to be treated like this? Panmir calmed his mind and explained.

"You must be mistaken. I'm a blacksmith invited by King Grid."

"I know."

"You know? But you want to teach me? I also have to make needles that even a child can make?"

"These are instructions from King Grid. Are you going against the king?"

"Kuhum...!"

Panmir felt uncomfortable and his face turned red.

'Grid wasn't trying to make me a colleague. He just wanted to insult me?'

Such doubts arose. Despite his reaction, Blacksmith White was already moving to his private furnace and anvil.

He thought that Panmir would leave.

'Yes, I should check how they will treat me.'

He followed behind White. White was taking out a dark, matte material in front of the furnace.

"Umm?"

The grumbling Panmir's attitude changed.

"What is this mineral?"

The color was the same as black iron, except that it wasn't glossy. It was a crystal like mineral but magic power could be felt from it. Panmir was very interested in the mineral and poked it with his fingers. His attitude was like a child seeing something for the first time.

White smiled. "You are really a blacksmith. Then check it yourself."

"T-Thank you."

White passed Panmir the mineral and he immediately used the appraisal skill. He was an advanced blacksmith with advanced mineral appraisal skills.

[Insane Dragon Iron]

A mineral that naturally occurs in the nest of the insane dragon Nevartan.

It has been influenced by Nevartan's madness for countless years and gained the chaotic ability 'Proliferation'

It doubles every 10 days.

This absurd nature makes it very difficult to control. The hardness is comparable to black iron, but the smelting difficulty is several times higher.

Weight: 5

"Heok!"

A mineral from a dragon lair? It was hard for an ordinary person to see such a mineral in their entire lifetime!

"Does the doubling include the volume and weight?"

"That's right. This mineral becomes twice as heavy and twice as big every 10 days.

"Huh... it can be useful in some cases."

It wasn't just one or two things that came to mind right now. Panmir was inspired and wanted to work with this mineral right away. But the degree of difficulty was several times higher than smelting black iron. Therefore, he wondered if he could handle it with his skills. White read his mind and laughed.

"Don't worry. From now on, I will teach you how to work this mineral."

"You...?"

White was too young. The blacksmith NPCs of this age that Panmir knew only had basic to intermediate level skills. The so-called geniuses were sometimes advanced level but they were far less than Panmir's Advanced Blacksmith's Craftsmanship skill.

Panmir didn't really trust White. But he didn't express his distrust. White was treating him well, so Panmir should be polite.

"I would appreciate it if you showed me."

"Then."

White nodded and threw the insane dragon iron into the furnace.

*Puok! Puok!*

"...Huh?"

Panmir admired White's appearance. White's skills in dealing with the temperature of the furnace were comparable to the old men of the empire.

'Of course, it isn't at a craftsman level... '

It was important to consider White's age. Unlike the old craftsmen of the empire, the young White had an infinite future. In 10 years, it seemed possible for him to catch up the craftsmen of the empire and even get ahead.

'It's tremendous talent. A different dimension from the geniuses I have seen so far. Is

he a blacksmith specializing in the smelting technique? Heok?"

Panmir observed White closely in order to learn, only to suck in a breath. It was because White's atmosphere became different once he finished smelting the insane dragon iron and started hammering it. He was like a sura. The smithy was the battlefield and the flames of the furnace was the cries of the enemy. The insane dragon iron set on top of the anvil was the king of the enemy. White grasped the weapon called a hammer and had the same dignity of a ruler of the battlefield.

*Ttaaang!*

White finished focusing and hammered the insane dragon iron as hard as possible.

*Ttaang~! Ttaaang!*

"..."

Panmir was shocked and couldn't close his mouth. White's hammering quality was equal to the old craftsmen of the empire!

"You, what is your identity?"

White explained to Panmir. "I am the head of the White Hammer Smithy and Grid's disciple. Thanks to Grid's deep compassion and precious teachings, I was able to become a craftsman."

"W-What?"

Grid didn't just develop his skills but also nurtured blacksmith craftsmen? Panmir was feeling thrilled when White spoke even more shocking news.

"King Grid has three more disciples besides me. They are Enoch from the Blue Flames Smithy, Byuksan of the Black Anvil Smithy, and Lahochu of the Red Tongs Smithy. We all received King Grid's order to educate you."

*Duguen! Duguen!*

Panmir's heart beat in anticipation. It was fierce enough to be somewhat burdensome to a body that was halfway to 100 years old!

"Panmir, you will learn the skills of the four of us from today. It will surely be a tough road and I need to know if you have sufficient determination. Are you willing to receive our techniques?"

*Ttiring~*

[A hidden quest has been created.]

[Learn the Blacksmithing Techniques (1)]

### ★ Hidden Quest ★

You have to spend 10 hours a day with White for a total of 300 days while learning his hammering techniques.

Quest Progress to Date: 1/300

Quest Reward: White Hammer Family's Hammering skill.

He would receive teachings 10 hours a day for 300 days. He would need to invest four years if it was four people. This was clearly a labor quest that violated common sense. It was clear that he had to be prepared to live a slave life like Hurent. Panmir clearly knew this fact, but didn't hesitate.

"I will learn it! I want to thank King Grid for giving me the opportunity and I will passionately follow you!"

"Okay."

[The quest has been accepted.]

The notification window popped up at the same time.

"Then gather some coal. I'll let you know how to make the insane dragon iron needles afterwards."

White's attitude changed. He started to give orders.

"C-Coal?"

"Yes, coal! Don't you know coal? Why are you standing there with a stupid expression? These are chores for a newcomer! It's the basics for a blacksmith!"

"Oh, no, I am an advanced blacksmith so..."

"Really? Then you can quit."

"Coal! I will bring it right now!"

It was the day when the 1st ranked blacksmith got the job as a newcomer worker. There were no rewards or skills learnt. Panmir's days passed while occasionally eating rainbow potatoes and his persistence and stamina stats rose quickly.

# Chapter 781

The Overgeared Kingdom started as an agricultural kingdom. Thanks to the agriculture developed by Piaro, the kingdom's finances were stabilized and the foundations of commerce could be established. The reason why Grid was able to train blacksmiths with Khan and to build a smithy complex was thanks to the money earned from agriculture.

"So much?"

Grid felt reluctant when he saw the mountain of wheat and potatoes transported from Bairan. The wheat and rainbow potatoes had become special products of the Overgeared Kingdom and were the most important export items for the nation's economy. He didn't want to give 100 tons to the empire.

"Why do we have to give an offering in the first place? We aren't even a tributary of the empire."

Lauel explained to the grim Grid. "It isn't an offering, it's a gift. Your Majesty asked to visit the empire first and the empire accepted the request. Isn't it basic courtesy to give a small gift in return for that?"

It was a meeting between the leaders of both kingdoms. It was a notable official event for the entire continent. The empire would entertain Grid for their own sake, but Grid and the Overgeared Kingdom's image would be tarnished if they came with empty hands.

"Don't think of it as a loss. The empire has prepared many events for Your Highness. Maybe they have even prepared small gifts. Simply with physical value, they will spend more money than us. It won't be a loss. And there is one more thing you can expect..."

*Kukukuk.* A demon like laugh emerged from Lauel.

"It's the reactions of the empire as they taste our wheat and potatoes. It might be completely to their tastes and they'll import large amounts."

The wheat grown by a legendary farmer was an improved species. The quality was

excellent compared to the wheat of any kingdom. Hadn't rumors spread that the bread and noodles of the Overgeared Kingdom were delicious? The empire couldn't be immune to the taste. It was highly likely that trade with the empire, which had been firmly closed, would be opened thanks to this opportunity.

"Is this why you prepared agricultural products as gifts?"

Grid was forced to admire Lauel's extraordinary head to pursue profit no matter the circumstances. He always felt it, but Lauel was truly a great blessing to Grid and the Overgeared Kingdom.

"This was Administrator Rabbit's idea, not mine. I can't match him when it comes to making money."

It was Rabbit who paid only 73 silver to Piaro when he was still a great swordsman. From the time he was recruited to now, Rabbit had been properly managing the finances of the kingdom. Without Rabbit, the growth rate of the Overgeared Kingdom would be two or three times slower than it was now.

Grid was the one who recruited Rabbit as the administrator.

"It's amazing when thinking about it now. Wasn't Your Majesty still a fool when you met Rabbit? How did Your Majesty manage to select and recruit talented people like Sir Rabbit? Are you a natural talent?"

"..."

At the very least, he wanted to be true to the person he was serving. This was Lauel's true heart. After several incidents, Lauel always tried to be honest with Grid. Sometimes his words were too much. Grid occasionally felt angry, but his gratefulness was bigger. Lauel's honesty gave Grid many opportunities to reflect on himself.

"The ability to select and recruit talents..."

Grid was reminded of all the people he recruited, including Khan, Piaro, Asmophel, and Sticks. It was amazing when thinking about it now. Weren't they all half-dead when they first met Grid? Grid had made a positive connection with them. Of course, the Character Observation skill attached to the Lord's Sword helped, but now Grid started to realize it. It wasn't easy for anyone to unconditionally make a person their own just by looking at the stats.

'Can I take pride in it? Khan. For me who captivated your heart.'

"Your Majesty?"

"Ah."

Grid woke up from his thoughts and wiped his eyes. He had shed tears without knowing.

Lauel saw his sad expression and asked carefully, "Khan's funeral... You really don't want a state funeral?"

Grid nodded. "Yes. This isn't the place where his soul should be buried."

Three days before he was scheduled to visit the empire. He headed somewhere else before that.

Winston. Khan's home.

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The concept of a corpse in Satisfy was small. Both players and NPCs turned to grey and dispersed into ash when they died. Bodies weren't seen unless they were in the middle of a specific quest or they were a necromancer. Grid was extremely grumpy due to this fact. He felt sorrow at not being able to take care of his precious person's remains.

But Grid was reminded of something. Satisfy had the concept of a soul. Braham's soul, Iyarugt's soul, and the souls of Khan's ancestors and son witnessed at the cemetery proved this fact. Grid believed it. Right now, Khan's soul was by his side. He thought about attaching Khan's soul to an item using the 'Granting an Ego' skill he obtained from the Behen Archipelago.

'I can't cause Khan suffering because of my greed.'

Grid saw it. The sorrows of the former legends after they were resurrected as death knights by Pagma. They wanted rest. Grid couldn't tie Khan's soul to him.

"Khan."

A small cemetery outside Winston. Grid stood alone where Khan's son, his wife, and his ancestors were buried. He kept wiping at the falling tears and took an item out of his inventory. It was a memorial stone he made in conjunction with the sculptors of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was the memorial stone where Khan's soul would stay.

"Please stay in heaven. You should only occasionally come down to the ground to play. I'll take good care of the cemetery. Ruby and Lord will come to visit often. The children..."

Grid placed the memorial stone in the center of the cemetery and couldn't resist anymore. He burst out sobbing.

After a while.

In the remote cemetery where no one was present, Grid fought with his grief alone.

*Thank you.*

*Thank you.*

A familiar voice haunted his ears.

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Overgeared King Grid. He received the legendary Pagma's abilities and was the hero of the former Eternal Kingdom. He beat the 32nd great demon, Belial, with his capable subordinates. Later, he overthrew the Eternal Kingdom, built the Overgeared Kingdom, and contributed greatly to the establishment of Valhalla.

"He cleaned up the Behen Archipelago and restored the Hall of Fame?"

"He even has a statue built there."

"Yohohoho... I feel like he's a new man of this era."

"It's safe to say he has completely stepped out of the shadows of the past."

"Yohoho... he also has a deep relationship with the pope of the Rebecca Church?"

"Yes. He also seems to have interactions with Sword Saint Kraugel."

"Yoho... that friend knows how to use his abilities well."

"I think so as well. Grid uses Pagma's techniques as bait to expand his network."

"Even Braham was involved with him?"

The Tower of Eternity. It was a group that studied magic under the aegis of the empire and violated numerous taboos in the name of developing magic.

"Yohoho, I want to see him soon."

The master of the magic tower, Goldhit. One of the 10 great magicians on the continent, she was a great power compared to Ashur. They were on completely different dimensions since birth. She was the fourth disciple of the legendary great magician Braham.

◊ ◊ ◊

"Uwaaaack!"

The capital of the Saharan Empire, Titan. On the way back from hunting, a necromancer from Immortal stopped by a grocery store and screamed. It was because a knife and axe pierced his body the moment he exited the store.

"Stop it now!"

The soldiers on patrol ran when they heard the fuss, but it was already too late.

"This is one member!"

The necromancer died and the hunters ran away smiling. They didn't care about the penalty for killing someone in a city. Why? The penalty was nothing compared to the reward they would gain.

"Did you film it properly?"

"Of course! One of Grid's items has been secured!"

"Yes! Puhahahat!"

The group of people laughed as they were chased by the guards. The players who saw them were impressed.

‘I’m envious!’

They needed to quickly find Immortal! The eyes of the players lit up as they roamed all over the place. Once they saw a necromancer, they tracked them, monitored them and figured out their identity. Some impatient people killed just because the other person was a necromancer. It was a hellish time for Immortal.

“Dammit!”

*Kwang!*

A village located in a remote part of the empress’ palace. The 347 members of Immortal were raging. They were nervous about not being able to step out of the palace due to Grid. At a time when they should be steadily hunting and gaining items, they had to hide like rats?

“That damn Veradin. He pretended to be smart, but fell completely.”

“Let’s turn in Veradin’s group. All of us don’t need to receive damage.”

“No matter how angry, is it okay to sell out our colleagues?”

“Then what should we do? Should we die together?”

The bonds of the Immortal members started to twist. Fear was deeply rooted in their hearts. It was fear of Grid who moved billions of players. They felt regret that they touched a sleeping lion who was now raining hell down on them. One of Immortal’s executives, Bullet, tried to calm the guild members. “Let’s wait and see. This atmosphere can’t be maintained forever. Their interest will wilt once they can’t find us.”

“Umm...”

Hunters who couldn’t find their game were bound to lose motivation. Immortal felt like they would be able to breathe if they hid like this for a while. At least until they heard the following news.

"G-Grid! Grid is going to visit the empire!!"

"What...?"

All of the Immortal members became deathly pale.

"He's the devil! The devil!"

He made them sinners just because he lost some blacksmith NPCs. Now he was going to the empire to hunt them directly? Wasn't he almost crazy at this point? The moment everyone was making a fuss.

"What is everyone afraid of? Isn't this something to be happy about?" Veradin appeared and said, "It's a chance to show our strength to Grid. Let's reverse the situation and hunt the man who came here for us."

Of course, they couldn't strike recklessly. According to the information obtained by Veradin, Grid would have an official schedule set by the empire. If the attack on Grid ruined the emperor's schedule, Immortal could be abandoned by the empire.

"We need to pick the right timing."

A mouse would bite back when cornered by a cat. Veradin felt that Grid should be pushed. At the same time, a group of merchants entered Empress Marie's palace.

# Chapter 782

"Hello Muto. Thank you for answering the invitation."

"The number two of the Overgeared Kingdom called me? I had to come running."

The 3rd ranked merchant, Muto. He was shaken when he received an invitation from the Overgeared Kingdom. The first player to become a king. He thought that if he was able to trade with the Overgeared Kingdom, which was progressive due to modern ideas, he could make great deals.

"Muto has already exchanged with the empire for several years?"

"It has been exactly four years. I was fortunate to encounter Duke Guardian during a quest and I started to sell things to the empire through the duke."

"Four years ago...? Isn't it faster than Kir?"

"Haha, that's right. I pioneered the empire's market first."

The 1st ranked merchant Kir was a big guy who had several merchant rankers under him and ran a huge trading company. He used his enormous wealth to equip himself with military power and recently purchased a whole city. This could be a stepping stone to building a kingdom. There were already many people calling Kir a king.

Lauel felt disbelief.

"You pioneered the empire's market first, so why are you ranked lower than Kir?"

The merchant rankings were determined not just by level, but through the trading volume and number of trades. Muto pioneered the continent's largest market first, but was ranked lower than Kir. It frankly made him seem incompetent. Muto revealed the truth. "I was beaten by Kir's trick and lost several accounts. His political power is several times higher than me."

Muto was a type of merchant to do everything directly. He conducted lucrative business by investigating the market and gaining information ahead of others. It was

why he took a risk and went to the East Continent. On the other hand, Kir was a master of slander. His specialty was taking away the businesses built by others. Muto had been hit several times.

"In the end, I'm not a vessel for the first rank. But isn't the vessel for the 3rd rank big enough? I'm confident that I can do enough."

Muto knew. The merchant that the Overgeared Kingdom wanted now wasn't the best merchant. If they wanted the best merchant, they would've called Kir instead of Muto.

"Please tell me what you called me for. I will do well and pay back your expectations."

'Not bad.'

He was a quick merchant without any bragging. It was good to believe in him.

"You accompanied King Grid on the East Continent for a few days? I can see why His Majesty liked you. Okay. I have a suggestion. Become a scammer."

"Huh...? A scammer?"

"Sell a defective item to the imperial palace. It means you will have to stop trading with the empire in the future."

"W-What is this?"

Despite the fact that Kir had deprived him of most of his business in the empire, he still had some dealings left. A lot of Muto's wealth came from the empire. Now Lauel was telling him to scam the imperial palace and give up on dealings in the future. As Muto thought the suggestion was absurd...

"The prize is the Overgeared Kingdom. We will leave one-third of our trade to the Muto Company."

"One-third of a kingdom's trade..."

The development of the Overgeared Kingdom was ongoing. Numerous players flocked to the Overgeared Kingdom based on Grid's absolute item production ability and Lauel's resourcefulness. In the future, the Overgeared market was likely to become the second largest after the empire. He was being given one-third of this market. It was an

unbelievable proposal.

"The first rank, shouldn't you take it?"

◊ ◊ ◊

"Sigh."

Muto was visiting the empress' palace. He recalled the meeting with Lauel two days ago and took a deep breath, calming his mind.

'This is the sky... an opportunity from the sky Grid. Do well Muto.'

Daring to scam the empire. He was crossing a river that he couldn't turn back from. Muto's hands shook from the tension and he swallowed cold water several times.

But.

"Did the sun rise in the west today? Sir Muto is coming to see me first, not His Majesty?"

After a 30 minute wait, Muto's trembling stopped with Empress Marie appeared. It was thanks to the passive skill Merchant's Fortitude. He would never shake when facing a trading partner.

"You're more beautiful every time I see you. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet the star of the empire. It will be the glory of my family for generations."

"How can natural beauty fade? Okay. I'm especially excited about the things you have brought today."

The merchants who traded with the imperial family always went to the emperor first. It was natural courtesy to give the highest priority over goods to the highest ranking person. Yet today Muto found the empress first, not the emperor. There was clearly a reason, but Marie couldn't help feeling good about it. It felt like she was being treated as superior to the emperor.

"The atmosphere isn't bad.'

Unlike her mild appearance, Empress Marie was a fickle and violent woman. Muto was

relieved that she was in a good mood and signalled to his subordinates.

"Isn't the material amazing?"

Empress Marie checked the items on display and was interested in two ornaments. They were a splendid chandelier and mobile made of a matte black metal.

"The place where the candles will be set are made to resemble the imperial chrysanthemum? When it's lit up, you can see the red-colored tulip."

"The light penetrates evenly into the matte frame.

"I like this. It feels elegant."

"Indeed, the empress has a discerning vision."

It wasn't a false compliment. Muto sincerely admired her. Before listening to the description of the product, the empress recognized them as special products.

"I don't know. What material is it made of?"

Marie was one of the world's leading authorities on gold and silver valuables. Due to her high position, the best items on the continent were gathered near her. Therefore, she had high insight and a lot of knowledge. But this was the first time she saw the matte black metal that made up the chandelier and mobile. She couldn't understand no matter how many times she touched it.

Now it was time to drive in the wedge. Muto gave a meaningful smile and explained, "It is a mineral from a dragon lair."

"What? D-Dragon lair?"

Marie doubted her ears. Humans managed to enter the nest of a dragon and obtain minerals? Her common sense told her it was impossible.

Muto gave her confidence. "It's a mineral from the lair of the insane dragon Nevartan."

"Nevartan..."

Nevartan went completely crazy for some reason and was wandering around the

world. Nevartan's lair would be empty. It would be a big hit for the person who found it.

"Check it out."

The convinced Empress Marie ordered the various experts standing behind her and they started to look closely at the chandelier and mobile. They came up with an answer in minutes.

"I don't know if it is a mineral from a dragon lair, but it's definitely a mineral I have never seen before."

"The workmanship of the mineral is also excellent. It's at least a craftsman level. However, the biggest flaw is the craftsmanship. It isn't a masterpiece because it isn't in harmony."

"But it's sufficient to be worth a lot."

"Okay. I like this. I'll buy two of them."

"Ah..."

Marie decided after hearing the opinions of the experts, only for Muto to become embarrassed. Marie frowned.

"What is it?

"T-That... with all due respect, I was going to show one of these to His Majesty. It is polite to show the emperor such a special thing..."

"Look Sir Muto."

"Yes."

"Get rid of the unnecessary acting. Didn't you bring these things to me first because you knew I would pay a higher price? I'll buy them. Don't worry. I will give one of them to His Majesty as a gift."

"You're truly amazing."

"Huhuhut."

There were few rare objects in the world. The emperor would be greatly pleased when the empress gave him one of these item as a gift.

'Sometimes I need to be charming to make him shed some suspicions.'

The empire was currently divided into two factions between the emperor and the empress. But the relationship between the emperor and Marie was good. The emperor tried to believe in Marie. The emperor recognized Marie's faction as the faction of 4th Prince Edan. Marie didn't make her own faction, but the people who wanted to put her son Edan on the throne were gathering by Marie's side. Empress Marie had been acting as a naive woman towards the emperor for decades.

"Now, this price should be enough?"

[You have received 580,000 gold as the transaction price for the Insane Dragon Iron Chandelier.]

[You have received 190,000 gold as the transaction price for the Insane Dragon Iron Mobile.]

Thanks to the merchant's passive skills Advanced Trading and Bargaining, as well as the products made from the insane dragon iron, Muto earned a huge amount of money. It was a huge benefit even if he had to return half of the profit to the Overgeared Kingdom according to the contract.

Muto smiled and bowed to the empress.

"I am thankful every time Your Majesty deals with a poor merchant like me."

A huge chandelier and a mobile with sharp leaves. They would be placed on the ceiling of the office and in the bedroom of the emperor and empress. The moment they failed to hold the weight and crashed down one month later, the empire would be in great turmoil.

Merchant Muto perfectly fulfilled his mission.

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“It’s huge.”

The convoy transporting 100 tons of wheat and potatoes and Overgeared King Grid arrived at Titan. His spirit disappeared as he gazed at the endless walls in front of him. He lost motivation when he witnessed the overwhelming scale of Titan, which made Reinhardt look shabby.

Grid weakly thought that it would be better if he avoided fighting with the empire forever. But he quickly got rid of this thought.

‘I will be swallowed up if I shrink back.’

The growth rate of the empire was much faster than the growth rate of the Overgeared Kingdom. He had to fight and take things away from them, otherwise he would end up losing.

‘I have to swallow them first before I lose.’

*Surururuk!*

Grid and the convoy moved along the shadows of the huge walls hanging over them. Kasim’s shadow soldiers were putting needles in the walls. Not a single one of the soldiers watching Grid’s procession noticed anything suspicious.

‘There is only one chance.’

Grid calculated that it would be in one month. The chandelier crashing would threaten the emperor and empress, while Titan’s walls, which stood for hundreds of years, would collapse. This would confuse the entire empire. That was his chance. Grid and the elites of the Overgeared Guild would infiltrate the imperial palace and kill all members of Immortal.

They would tell Immortal that nowhere in the world was safe. This was the goal of his long-term plan.

‘I will make them feel fear and regret every night.’

Grid’s eyes blazed as he thought about Veradin and Agnus. After a while, he entered

through the gates.

"Overgeared King Grid is entering!"

"Waaahhhhhh!"

"King Grid, welcome!"

"Welcome to the Saharan Empire!"

*Baam baam! Baambabababa!*

The empire's soldiers and people warmly welcomed him. Flowers bloomed all over Titan and the cheerful music helped the atmosphere. The reporters from various stations relayed the situation in a loud voice.

〔In history, the Saharan Empire has only received one formal guest. The first and last time was when they welcomed Prince Rajandra of the Lubana Kingdom.〕

〔The empire is more accustomed to domination than diplomatic relationships. From the point of view of the empire that controls all kingdoms on the continent, they don't recognize anyone as a VIP guest.〕

〔I now have respect for Grid who is treated as an honored guest by the empire.〕

Grid was treated as a honored guest of the empire for the first time since Prince Rajandra handed Undefeated King Hamad's head over to the empire. The people of the world were thrilled to realize that Grid was a much greater person than they thought. The same was true for Grid.

"These formalities are for me."

He really would've been shamed if he came with bare hands. Grid waved to the people with a dignified expression. It wasn't just due to his high dignity stat. Grid was familiar with big events so he could look natural. This was the power of experience.

'Your Majesty, I have been looking through the palace with shadow movements and I think you should be nervous.' He heard Kasim's voice. 'It seems that most of the powers of the empire are gathered here in Titan. I have detected at least 10 people in the palace who are more powerful than me.'

"Can they read you?"

'Probably.'

Kasim had previously been detected by Duke Steim's knight, Laden. It was highly likely that his stealth wouldn't work against real geniuses or high-ranking officials.

"Don't enter the imperial palace."

It would be bad if he was caught bringing an assassin into the place where the emperor was. Especially if Kasim's appearance was exposed. Kasim was the last survivor of the Nero, which had been destroyed by the empire. His appearance was very noticeable.

'But... '

Grid laughed at Kasim's hesitation.

"It's fine because I have the Knights Summoning."

He could summon any of the elites of Overgeared, as well as Kasim, Piaro, and Asmophel. He had already put them on standby just in case.

"Sigh. Then let's go."

What would the owner of the strongest forces and his nearest aides be like? Grid hung the Great Lord's Sword at his waist and entered the palace. At that moment.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

The effect of the Hero King that responded to Sword Saint Kraugel was activated, causing Grid's fighting energy to rise. It was because he encountered Mercedes, the 1st Knight guarding the entrance. Mercedes nodded slightly as she discovered Grid.

[Mercedes' deep eyes have looked at you.]

[Some of your stats and skills are forcibly revealed to Mercedes.]

[You can't resist.]

[Mercedes' sharp sword energy threatens you. The strong pressure makes your mind and body shrink. All speeds are reduced by 30% and skill casting speed is reduced by 20%.]

[You have resisted.]

[Reflecting the status has failed.]

Grid had experienced this in the past. But Mercedes was the one feeling surprised, not Grid.

“You...?”

“I don't know what you saw.”

*Tak.*

Grid placed a hand on the stunned Mercedes' shoulder and gripped hard.

“Next time, please bow your head a bit deeper. How can a knight dare to look a king in the eyes?”

“Kuk...!”

This was the person who had been kneeling in front of her a few months ago? Mercedes' beautiful faced wrinkled while Grid entered the hall behind her.

At the same time.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong person...]

[You have discovered a strong...]

...

...

The notification windows kept rising.

# Chapter 783

*Chill.*

'What?'

There were 30 pillars on each side in intervals of four meters. Grid was overwhelmed because the size of the great hall, which was just the tip of the palace, was bigger than he imagined. He felt helpless since the kingdom he and his colleagues worked so hard to build was just a speck of dust in front of the empire.

But the source of the alienation and fear that Grid currently felt wasn't the great hall. Grid gulped and cautiously moved. At the far end of the hall, a person on the throne was watching Grid.

*Step, step, step...*

As he stepped forward, Grid's fighting energy responded to this 'era's powerhouse' and the color deepened. Some people observed the purple red glow with interest, some people looked upset, and some people didn't notice.

In the silence.

"Overgeared King Grid greets Your Majesty the Emperor."

Grid reached the stairs of the stage where the throne stood and bowed his head. He knelt on one knee and bowed politely. Emperor Juander. The greatest power of this age. Numerous people and a huge army that covered the land followed him. Grid didn't disagree that he was the master of the continent. Juander might be a present and future enemy, but Grid couldn't skip the courtesies. The bitter blades were hidden behind his back.

"You truly are the Hero King." He seemed to have natural white hair. The emperor's white hair was shining, unlike the usual hair that elderly people had. "King of the Overgeared Kingdom, I sincerely welcome you to the empire. I will greet you. I am the emperor."

Was a long introduction needed? The word emperor meant he was already the master of heaven and earth. Juander wasn't arrogant, but being the emperor was a huge position.

*Chill.*

'What is this?'

Grid knew immediately after entering the hall. Grid realized why there was a chill down his spine and realized why he felt fear. Was it due to the lines of strong people on the left and right? No. The direct source of this huge fear was the emperor.

'...The last boss?'

It was impossible to observe the emperor using the Legendary Blacksmith's Eyes or Character Observation. The difference in levels was too great. But Grid's high insight told him that the emperor was strong. Grid couldn't overlook him!

'Isn't this beyond expectations?'

As mentioned several times before, an NPC's strength was often proportional to their status. In particular, those representing a nation or clan were really great. The water clan and the evil eyes were good examples. How strong was the emperor, the master of the continent?

Grid expected that the emperor wouldn't be easy. But he didn't know it would be this much.

'Legendary level... '

The system might make the 'emperor' equivalent to a 'legend.' It was natural when thinking about it. Wouldn't the founder of the empire be a myth? The royal pedigree was special.

"Yes, did you like the welcome?"

"It's more than I deserve. I'm glad that you were willing to accept my sudden request for a visit."

"It might be temporary, but we are allies. It's only natural for me and my people to

respect you. Just as you were just polite to me."

The words were full of hidden meaning. The emperor was smiling with a good face, but no favor could be found in the grey eyes that seemed like a beast.

"Yes, what's the reason that you came to find me right now?" The puzzled emperor watched Grid.

"I came to say thank you to Your Majesty, who gave us the mercy of a truce."

"Mercy of a truce..."

The emperor's eyes twitched. What was the reason for the empire first offering a truce to the Overgeared Kingdom? When the empire was about to invade Valhalla, the large army of the Overgeared Kingdom gathered on the border of the empire.

That's right. The emperor didn't want to admit it, but the empire had folded before the Overgeared Kingdom. The empire, which had always one-sidedly trampled on foreign countries, was forced to be diplomatic for the first time. This was a painful shame to the empire. If possible, Juander didn't want to be reminded of it again and hoped it would be erased from the empire's history.

Now this person brought up the empire's embarrassment. Grid didn't have such intentions, but the emperor misunderstood it.

"This son of a bitch dares?"

Punching King Rigal. One of the empire's seven dukes and captain of the air force. He lead a squad of 500 griffons and 300 wyverns. Rigal also led an army of 100,000 to 1,000,000 troops and had tremendous pride in himself and the empire. Rigal couldn't forgive Grid for ignoring the empire and suddenly claiming to be a king.

Rachel, another duke who had been looking at Grid's fighting energy from the beginning, calmed him down.

"The other person is an honored guest. Don't get caught by his provocation. Will you cause international embarrassment just because you can't suppress your anger? Well, I don't know if that was really a provocation. Kukuk!"

Rachel was a descendant of Dehakel, a meritorious retainer at the founding of the

empire and a legendary spearman. She used a spear and was the competitor to Kirinus, the best spearman on the continent. The Twilight Spearsmanship that she raised in a war made her comparable to the Red Knights.

Grid felt the atmosphere and inwardly grumbled.

‘They came here to greet me, only to not say hello.’

It was nasty. But what could he do? They were powerhouses and Grid was weak. He must endure any treatment that he received. For now.

[Rigal]

Level: 439

Occupation: Rider

Stats: ?????

Skills: ?????

[Rachel]

Level: 475

Occupation: Spearman

Stats: ?????

Skills: ?????

‘Are they the Five Pillars?’

Grid was confirming the information of these strangers when a new voice was heard in his ears.

“Did you really come up this way just to say thank you?”

Even the emperor treated Grid as a king, yet the owner of the voice ignored all his titles. Grid and the emperor frowned at the rudeness.

"Reinhardt was recently attacked by the organization called Immortal?"

The information of the person starting an argument appeared in Grid's eyes.

[Limit]

Level: 468

Occupation: Sword Duke

Stats: ???

Skills: ???

The master of the Red Knights and the best swordsman in the empire. Grid had also heard of Sword Duke Limit. Limit ignored the unhappy Grid and the emperor and kept on talking.

"The organization called Immortal is now here in Titan. The real reason you came to the empire is to hunt them... Can I say that?"

"Coming here to hunt Immortal?"

The empire might be a bigger nation than the Overgeared Kingdom, but Limit was a duke and Grid was a king. Whatever the truth, it was basic courtesy to at least outwardly treat him as a king. Yet Limit didn't show any manners towards Grid. It felt like the entire Overgeared Kingdom was being ignored. A smile appeared on Limit's face as he saw the fighting energy of the angry Grid.

'Yes, reveal it.'

There were few people who liked the exchange between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom. Emperor Juander requested a truce with a small kingdom. He was called the most incompetent of all the emperors. What if at this time, Grid showed hostility to Limit, the representative of the nobles?

Limit's loyalty to the emperor would weaken and he could turn to the empress. That's right. Limit's provocation towards Grid had a clear purpose. At this moment, Grid was on the verge of being provoked.

Grid's agitation was an ideal situation. Juander would be a pathetic man ignored by the king of a small kingdom while Limit, the leader of the empress' faction, would suppress this king. As soon as such rumors spread, the position of the empress would become much bigger than before.

Limit was looking forward to it.

"...If I visited the empire's capital for such a reason, things would be much more enjoyable than they are now. I would be able to punish them with my own hand. But isn't it a pity? I didn't know that those villains were hiding here until now."

Grid didn't fall for Limit's provocations. Reaching the top spot among two billion users made him more prudent and wise.

"But it's strange. Duke Limit, how do you know about Immortal? Are you the one who sent Immortal to the Overgeared Kingdom?"

Grid wasn't just suppressing his anger. He returned the provocation to Limit in another form. Playing one side against the other.

"Are you dissatisfied with the armistice agreement that His Majesty made? That's why you attacked the Overgeared Kingdom while breaking the armistice agreement that His Majesty made himself?"

Grid highlighted 'His Majesty' several times. It was to push Limit as going against the will of the emperor.

'Of course, it won't work.'

Grid was the emperor's enemy and would be an enemy any time in the future. It wouldn't be hard for the emperor to see that Grid was playing one side against him. Grid was playing one side against the other and Limit was doing the same. But surprisingly, the emperor fell for it. He didn't think it was ridiculous. The problem was that Limit was in the empress' faction. In particular, the emperor had frequently disciplined Limit and the Red Knights recently. The emperor believed that it wouldn't be unusual for Limit to have a grudge against him and for Limit to be behind the

Overgeared Kingdom's invasion.

But he didn't show it on the outside. It was impossible to doubt a servant in front of Grid.

"The situation has become noisy. Let's enjoy dinner."

The emperor tried to calm things down as much as possible.

After that.

'What can I do about the low level of the non-combat classes?'

Grid was floored when he confirmed the names and level of the supporters attending the dinner. The average level of the powerhouses of the empire was higher than Piaro. The problem was that Piaro had a farmer class. The power of the empire was a huge pressure and Grid felt anxious about the uncertain future. But there was a person even more nervous than him.

"That Grid... '

It was the beautiful woman who gave off an icy feeling, Mercedes. The owner of this beauty, the First Knight couldn't take her eyes off Grid. It was obvious vigilance. Mercedes was afraid of Grid. It was because her inborn insight at understanding the talent and potential of the target couldn't measure Grid correctly. There was an unknown feeling in the shoulder that Grid had touched an hour before. It was the first time she felt like this, causing Mercedes to feel greater confusion.

"He isn't insignificant."

Sword Duke Limit came to her side and whispered, "Hit Grid."

"Yes...?"

"You don't have to kill him yourself. Just tell Grid that the empire ordered you to strike at him."

"You want to make it clear that the empire is attacking an honored guest? Can I ask why?"

"The intention is for Grid to break the armistice first. What would happen if the armistice agreement that His Majesty made was one-sidedly destroyed by the other party? It will be an absolute disgrace. His political position will fall to an extent that can't be imagined."

"..."

Limit was a person conflicted between the temptation of the empress and his loyalty to the emperor. Now he seemed to be firmly entrenched next to the empress. The emperor's actions of keeping the Red Knights in check had brought about the worst result.

Limit whispered to the sad Mercedes. "The empress will give troops to support you. They're good necromancers. Strike at Grid when he's returning to the Overgeared Kingdom."

"...I understand."

Was this right? Mercedes was certain that it wasn't right. All knights were loyal to their master. It was the knight's fate to remain faithful even if they didn't like what their master was doing. Mercedes felt like she was being denied her very existence.

Mercedes bit her lips until blood flowed as she looked between the emperor and Grid. At the same time, in Empress Marie's palace.

"This is a great opportunity. We'll show Grid."

Veradin, the mastermind between Limit joining with the empress, convened the elites of Immortal.

# Chapter 784

"This is also okay."

Emperor Juander's face was satisfied as he tasted the food coming out in turn. The other officials were the same. The imperial cuisine, which reinterpreted the food culture throughout the continent, was originally famous for its taste. But it tasted especially good today. The imperials chefs seemed to be at their best since an honored guest was visiting.

'Huhuhut, that hillbilly will be shocked by the taste.'

Punching King Rigal watched Grid's response. The specialty of the Overgeared Kingdom was potatoes? Rigal wanted to see what type of response the king of a country that ate only pig food would show to the food of the great empire. It was as he expected.

"The food tastes good. In particular, the food made from flour are excellent."

Grid's reaction was as Rigal expected. He admired and praised the food. The Saharan Empire was truly the best in every way. Grid's admiration made the emperor feel good. Rigal confirmed the smile on the emperor's face and quickly clapped his hands. The chef soon came running.

"Y-You called me."

Being called to the emperor's presence? The head chef was full of fear. He was worried he had made a mistake and angered the emperor.

Rigal spoke to the sweating chef. "Explain the food to our honored guest. I'm sure there are a lot of foods he doesn't know. Shouldn't you take care of this part?"

Every dish had history and background. Knowing it made eating the food more delicious. Rigal had this logic but in reality, he was treating Grid as a hillbilly. The contempt in his eyes was clear when he looked at Grid. But Grid didn't flinch back when facing him. He smiled calmly and enjoyed the situation.

"Thank you for the favor, Sir Rigal."

"Of course..."

Rigal was surprised by Grid's gratitude.

'You still haven't noticed.'

Grid didn't even know he was being made fun of. There was a teasing taste. Rachel shook her head at Rigal and made an insidious remark.

"You're still a child. You're bothering a weak person."

"You are the one saying this? When I recall the memories of being bullied by you as a child, I still jump up in my sleep."

The two of them had been close since childhood due to the connection between their families. The friendly atmosphere caused by their memories didn't last long.

"As the Overgeared King may already know, all of today's dishes are cooked using the wheat of the Overgeared Kingdom."

"...!"

"...?"

The head chef's unexpected words caused the people watching the situation pleasantly to feel surprise and the emperor frowned. Grid was still smiling.

"Indeed, it was like this. Somehow the taste of the wheat dishes were particular good. It was because you used the wheat produced in the Overgeared Kingdom."

"You already know. Yes, that's right. I'm grateful for your gift of the best wheat on the continent."

The head chef was just a chef. He was ignorant about political things. He recognized Grid as a precious guest of the emperor and was able to purely praise the Overgeared Kingdom's wheat. It was unfortunate. The chef might lose his job today. Grid looked at Rigal's dark expression and wanted to sneer.

'This isn't it.'

A large-hearted person was better than an childish one. Grid acted wisely as he was reminded that he was representing the Overgeared Kingdom.

"You are surely the head chef of the imperial family if you can recognize the value of our wheat. I'm happy that a chef like you can make wonderful food for His Majesty the Emperor every day. I'm envious."

"Y-You're overpraising me."

The head chef was thrilled by the praise and bowed, while the unpleasant looking emperor ended up smiling. He liked Grid's consideration.

"The Overgeared King is right. I am happy because I have a chef who can make such wonderful food with good ingredients. Now is the time to bring out the 1,000 year old wine. Take a glass."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

Thanks to Grid, the atmosphere of the dinner party became relaxed again. The emperor, Grid, and the officials enjoyed the moment as they drank from their glasses. The emperor was delighted and they all had to hide what they were feeling inside.

'Tsk'

In a corner of the venue, Limit chewed his food with a sour expression and stood up. He was heading to the empress' palace.

◇ ◇ ◇

"He has been through many hardships."

Limit evaluated Grid.

"His ability to read the situation is excellent. He's a wise man who knows how to control himself and isn't easily provoked. He also takes advantage of the opponent's provocation."

Marie showed interest as she listened to the story while staring at her nails.

"Isn't it surprising? I thought he was a simple and violent character who purely swallowed up a kingdom with force."

"I also thought the same but... it looks like he is a natural born politician."

The expression of 'natural born' wasn't suitable for Grid. Grid was originally a person lacking in every way. But Limit didn't know this. Like Limit said, the Grid who Limit met today was the Grid that had gone through countless hardships. It was a Grid who had already grown. Limit was forced to appreciate him.

"As Veradin said, he's a formidable opponent."

Veradin. One day, he suddenly appeared and got the favor of Empress Marie. Limit had been suspicious, but he was forced to acknowledge Veradin.

"Yes, that's right. We must strike Grid as planned today and make Grid go against the emperor. I will tell the Red Knights."

"Okay. I will send Immortal. Please finish it well."

A smile appeared on Marie's face as she nodded. The fact that she had just been the daughter of her family and could now give orders to the duke of the empire gave her great joy. What would she feel like when she placed her son on the highest position and held more power? She got goosebumps just imagining it.

◇ ◇ ◇

-*What type of person is the emperor?*

The outskirts of Titan. As Grid moved away from the cheering crowds, Kasim asked from the shadows.

'Despite the fact that the emperor was known as a tyrant, he was surprisingly ordinary. He might be a good ruler.' Grid thought, but he remained silent. For Kasim, Emperor Juander was a hated person who he couldn't afford to kill.

In the end, Grid replied casually, "The emperor, well, he is the emperor. He was unbelievably arrogant."

-.... *You are deepening.*

"Huh?"

*-Unlike the past, you are speaking very carefully.*

Kasim had been observing Grid since before Lord was born. It meant he knew Grid when he was immature. Kasim watched Grid's growth in real time and he saw that the current Grid was reaching the end of his growth.

*-You don't have to worry about me. I would like to hear your honest opinion. What type of person is the emperor?*

Kasim repeated the question and Grid replied.

"He wasn't as selfish as I expected."

The master of the continent. It wasn't strange if the person who accomplished such a thing was violent, brutal, and selfish. However, the emperor that Grid met was more careful and respectful than expected. It was a shameful story but the current emperor was better than Grid when he was just grasping his power.

"He surprisingly has plenty of friends."

"..."

"But that is the individual called Juander."

Grid knew.

"As the emperor, he's as ferocious and selfish as we thought."

History proved this fact. Wasn't he the emperor who conquered and wiped out many lives in the name of the emperor?

"Eventually, we will fight. The emperor will remain an object of hatred forever. You don't have to worry. Just dream of revenge."

The driving force behind Kasim was revenge on the empire. The more he dreamt of revenge, the more he developed. Grid naturally wanted Kasim to develop.

"Today I didn't see any of the Five Pillars. There were only seven dukes and the knights.

But I mistook them for the Five Pillars."

It meant that everyone was strong. He could imagine how much stronger the Five Pillars were. He easily escaped Kyle the other day due to Braham and Mumud's pincer attack. But without Braham, both Grid and the Ares Army would be in danger.

"Become stronger, Kasim."

*-Yes, Your Majesty.*

Grid had already achieved his dream of being the best. The current Grid couldn't be ignored by anyone and was an object of envy. However, this was in reality. In the gigantic world of Satisfy, Grid was still weak and he had an obligation to protect his precious people. Strength, more strength was needed.

*Clatter, clatter.*

Grid's carriage slowly moved through the dark forest. It was a speed keeping in mind the soldiers and transport convoy followed them. It was also because of Grid's order. Overgeared King Grid was growing into a wise king.

"It's ridiculous."

Deep in the forest.

Veradin saw the carriage slowly approaching in the distance.

"Human choices and behavior are based on a desire for compensation. Humans do things because they want something. Let's take the example of libido. For what reason do people feel sexual desire? The pleasure is compensation for breeding. It's proof that compensation is the ultimate need."

There was a smile on Veradin's normally expressionless face.

"The compensation dominating Grid is a desire to be respected. As a person who has been despised for most of his life, he tends to be extremely obsessed with the evaluation of others. He dreams that everyone in the world will acknowledge and respect him. It's a desire to be acknowledged by the soldiers, not consideration for the soldiers, that is behind Grid's hypocritical act of slowing the carriage."

Grid was a lump of pretenses. He was a man who was always bluffing. Due to this, he became more attached to revenge. He was afraid that the world would ignore him again if he didn't get revenge for the damage inflicted on him. In fact, Grid was planning a revenge play that went beyond Veradin's expectations.

"A simple human."

Veradin's face showed no motivation as he looked at Grid's gradually approaching carriage. People like Grid were so prevalent in the world that Veradin couldn't become interested in Grid. Then what about Agnus? Agnus was filled with a desire to compensate for his 'loss.' He was a very unusual case. Veradin wanted to observe him longer. In order to stay near Agnus, it was necessary to restore their relationship.

"The means of recovery..."

Veradin held the Ghost's Necklace in his hand and started to infuse magic power into it.

"Grid, you are holding it. Now die. And burn with a stronger vengeance."

Direct the grudge towards Agnus and stir up Agnus' madness. Once Agnus was in a stage of oblivion, he would be forced to rely on Veradin again.

"Summon, Death Knight."

*Kuwaaah...*

Kyleo, the one who drove Khan to death, responded to Veradin's command and raised his body from the ground. Hundreds of skeleton knights and skeleton mages had already surrounded Grid's carriage.

'It isn't right.'

The First Knight watching the scene, Mercedes' eyes shook.

# Chapter 785

*Screech. Screech. Screech...*

*Clatter. Clatter.*

*Screech...*

As the carriage containing Grid entered deep into the forest, the cries of the beasts subsided. The only sounds that could be heard in the silent forest were the wheels of the carriage and the footsteps of the soldiers.

“Monster?”

The birds and beasts hiding was a sign that monsters would appear. Grid naturally knew such common sense.

Kasim replied to Grid.

*-Monsters can't pop up on a forest that the people of Titan often use.*

*-It's people.*

*-There are many people hiding in the area.*

Kasim's shadows spread out in the forest that was filled with darkness. Kasim reported back.

*-The enemy. There are more than 300 of them.*

“Thieves?”

*-No. They're the people who attacked Khan.*

“...!!”

Immortal! The nonchalant looking Grid rose from his seat. His face distorted like a

demon as he opened the door of the carriage.

*Kuweeeeeh!*

*Kwaaaaah!*

*Clack! Clack clack!*

The ground shook as hundreds of red lights appeared in the bushes. As the dark clouds covering the full moon were lifted, the blue moonlight shone onto the forest and revealed hundreds of unsightly skeletons. It was a large undead army. The vanguard contained skeleton knights while the skeleton mages were in the rear.

"Build up a stronger sense of revenge."

From far away, a sweet voice was heard in the rear of the undead army. Grid jumped out of the carriage and saw the white-haired young man.

"Veradin...!"

The person who made Khan's last moments filled with pain. The target of hatred that Grid killed dozens or even hundreds of times in his head!

"Die!"

*Kuwaaaaaang!*

Kasim had no time to stop him. Grid pulled out the Ideal Dagger, used Quick Movements and immediately rushed towards Veradin. He put away the Ideal Dagger and pulled out a weapon.

"Grid! Get him!"

"Kill that bastard!"

*Kwaaaaah!*

The necromancers shouted excitedly as they discovered Grid and dozens of skeleton knights blocked Grid's way. They wielded huge swords and spears, completely focused on only killing Grid.

*Kwa kwang!*

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

The four God Hands transformed into Lifael's Spear, inflicting catastrophic damage to evil beings and opening the way for Grid.

"Heok...!"

"T-This is ridiculous...!"

Dozens of skeleton knights over level 250 were turned to ashes at once? The spears also moved without Grid touching them? The astonished necromancers simultaneously thought.

"The best...!"

The necromancers were reminded. The opponent they were currently trying to hunt was the one who broke the sky. Grid stormed into the middle of enemy camp and pressed the button of the Pulling Device.

*Hwiririk!*

Red and black swords appeared in the moonlight, rotating before joining together.

*Seokeok!*

*Puhahahak!*

The skeleton knights and necromancers standing in the direction of the rotation were hit. The Pulling Device combined the two swords into one. The Enlightenment Sword.

"Veradinnnnnn!"

*Kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!*

The earth shook. It felt like the forest would fly away. Grid rushed through the undead army as four spears rotated around him, reminiscent of someone breaking through the sea.

‘Now he’s just a monster’

Grid’s presence rose to the rank of deities. Veradin wasn’t surprised because he already knew this, but Grid’s presence was beyond the scope that he observed. Veradin’s tension soared to the peak as Grid narrowed the distance with a fearsome expression. His legs were shaking. But Veradin had a smile on his face. It was a smile of satisfaction.

*Kwaaaaah!*

Did he believe in the four spears around him? Or was it because he lost his mind in front of his enemies. Grid was so focused on Veradin that he was unable to respond to the attack of the death knight that suddenly appeared.

*Puok!*

The poisonous dagger of Kyleo pierced Grid’s heart. It was an attack filled with the poison master’s killing power. It gave a paralysis that couldn’t be resisted to the target and simultaneously reduced the target’s health by 50%. It was Kyleo’s ultimate ability that had a very low chance of causing instantaneous death.

“Now!”

A perfect opportunity to defeat the crazy beast! After confirming that Grid was trapped, Veradin shouted and the skeleton mages simultaneously chanted a prepared spell.

‘I got him!’

47 skeleton mages used magic at the same time. Veradin was convinced when he saw the explosive magic power. He had no doubt that Grid would receive huge damage from the magic bombardment and enter the immortality state. That’s right. In the midst of the urgent situation, Veradin hadn’t confirmed it yet.

[Death Knight Kyleo has returned to an inactive state.]

[The target didn’t receive any damage.]

[The target has resisted the absolute paralysis and poison.]

These notification windows!

"What?"

Veradin's face was dismayed as he belatedly checked the notification windows. Veradin couldn't understand it. Kyleo's dagger had clearly stabbed Grid's heart. Veradin had seen it with his own eyes. Yet the attack was for nothing? Grid didn't receive any damage?

"What is this...? Stop!"

Veradin was upset that things went differently than planned and hurriedly shouted. But it was too late. The necromancers commanded their summoned skeleton mages to activate the magic.

*Huuuuuonng!*

Gravity Boom. It was advanced black magic available to skeleton mages over level 300. It was commonly used as the ultimate spell of a skeleton mage. It modified the gravity of the specified area and slowed down the target, while causing an explosion. The spell was powerful but the scope was too narrow and the casting time was very long. It was even slower to deploy. It was almost impossible to hit a moving target with Gravity Boom.

That's why...

"M-Moving?"

Grid resisted Kyleo's paralysis and poison with Khan's posthumous work Valhalla and avoided Gravity Boom. Grid took one step towards Veradin.

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

Two steps.

*Peng! Pepepepeong!*

Three steps. Every time he got closer, a senseless explosion occurred behind him. As

the forest became a wasteland, Grid used Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link, to get rid of the skeleton mages as he reached Veradin.

"This is the first time." Grid's voice, full of killing intent, reached Veradin's eyes. "You're going to die for me."

This death was just the beginning, not the end.

Grid declared, "You will keep dying because of me over and over. I will make you suffer more pain than Khan felt."

*Puk!*

*Puk puk!*

Kyleo kept attacking Grid to protect his master, but it was in vain. He attacked Grid with assassination skills, which were resisted by Khan's armor.

"You're crazily overgeared."

Veradin said with a silly expression.

"Shut your stinky mouth."

Grid didn't give him a chance to speak. He swung the Enlightenment Sword. But the sword never reached Veradin's neck.

*Jjeejeeeong!*

All of a sudden, a sword flew and blocked the Enlightenment Sword.

"You...?"

Transparent blue hair faded into the moonlight and looked like it was shedding frost. Grid was puzzled as he grasped the identity of the woman who interfered.

"Mercedes?"

"..."

The First Knight. The strongest sword that exercised the will of the empire. In the end, she was just a tool. She said with a sad expression, "I'm sorry."

"Kuk...!"

*Jjeejeeeong!*

Grid's body rose in the air. It was because he was hit by Mercedes's shield that rose at an angle that couldn't be seen. It was an overwhelming 'charge.' Grid flew through the air and showed a defenseless appearance.

"Your Majesty!"

Kasim's voice was heard from behind him. Kasim and the soldiers were surrounded by several Red Knights. While Grid was blinded by Veradin, Kasim and the soldiers were also fighting.

"Shadow Move...!"

Kasim attempted to save Grid. However, his range of movements were greatly reduced due to the moonlight swallowing up the darkness. He couldn't move long distances and was caught from behind by the Red Knights.

"Ugh!"

"Kasim...!"

Grid knew who Kasim was. Lord's mentor, friend, and family. It was Kasim who filled the vacant position of 'father' for Lord. Yes, Kasim was like Khan to Lord.

"No...!!"

He couldn't lose Kasim. Grid forgot the enemies in front of his eyes as he fully focused on Kasim. Grid used Fly and flew to Kasim to save him from the Red Knights. No, he tried to fly there. Mercedes was the problem.

*Chaaeng! Chaeeeeeng!*

She unleashed her sword at the fastest speed that matched Kraugel and pressed Grid. Mercedes avoided the God Hands swinging Mjolnir after the duration of Item

Transformation ended and blocked Grid's way. Grid's confusion disappeared and was replaced with anger.

"You dog...! The emperor...! The emperor ordered you?!"

The emperor sent Grid off with a smile only to hit him in the back of the head? Mercedes couldn't carelessly reply to Grid.

Veradin's voice filled the silence instead. "If you're smart then you should've thought about it. Do you think I could attack you without any insurance?"

He believed in the strength of the Red Knights and the full moon. Veradin's plan was perfect. Now the only thing left was to kill Overgeared King Grid and announce it. The Overgeared Kingdom's wrath would grow bigger and Immortal's reputation would naturally rise. Agnus would no longer be able to stand by.

Veradin smiled with satisfaction. He knew that Grid had the three heavenly kings and the Overgeared members that he could summon. But he believed there was no way to stop the 10 Red Knights that included the First Knight, even if all of them were summoned.

'Please summon your knights.'

He would kill all the people Grid relied on. The moment that Veradin was rejoicing.

*Puook!*

Mercedes' sword, which boasted a different strength from Lorex, pierced Grid's abdomen.

"Cough...!"

This woman was truly a monster. She was equal or much better than the seven dukes of the empire. Grid coughed up blood but he wasn't worried about his life right now. He cared about Kasim's finite life.

'It's over for Kasim if I die.'

Lord would be upset. Grid didn't want his child to feel such sadness and hatred. Grid could only make one choice.

“Knight... Cough! Summoning...!”

The strongest power that Grid relied on. The only one with the power to achieve Grid’s desire!

“Piaro!”

“...?!”

The name buried deep in her chest. Mercedes became blank as she witnessed a man appearing in a pillar of light.

# Chapter 786

*The pillars supporting the country. The empire was eternal and the people would be at ease.*

This was a verse of a song that was once popular throughout the empire. Great Swordsman Piaro and Splendid Swordsman Asmophel. The people of the empire gained great courage and hope when they listened to the song that praised the two heroes of the empire.

It was the same for the young Mercedes. She had dreams of becoming a knight and was raised humming the heroes' song. Mercedes overcame every hardship and trial in the hope that she could someday wear the same red armor as the two heroes. For her, the tragedy of 12 years ago was a huge shock.

“Piaro!”

“...?!”

The name buried deep in her chest. The moment when the name of the sinner flowed from Grid's mouth.

*Flash!*

The pillar of light fell and a man appeared inside. He was a middle-aged man dressed in shabby clothing and covered in dirt and sweat. He wore a straw hat on his head and he was holding a sickle and hand plow with hands covered in calluses. He looked like a farmer, but Mercedes wasn't deceived by the appearance. Despite the 12 years of misunderstanding, she recognized his identity with one glance.

“Piaro...!”

Great Swordsman, Hero, Pillar, Emperor's Sword, Head Teacher, Captain...

They were all the titles that Mercedes once used for Piaro in the past. Now the best courtesy she could give Piaro was to not speak the stigma of ‘traitor.’ Piaro defended Grid from her sword and made a bittersweet expression.

"That keen-eyed girl is now a beautiful knight."

No regrets could be found in Piaro's eyes as he recalled the past. This made Mercedes' beautiful face distort.

"You...!"

Why didn't he miss the past? How could he be so dignified? Why was he standing on the side of the Overgeared King? It couldn't be.

"Your Majesty, are you safe?"

"Thanks to you."

"I am here to serve."

"Don't tell me..."

The empire in Piaro's heart. It had completely disappeared?

"Ick...!"

Mercedes eyes became red without her knowing. There was a sense of struggle as she tried to hold back her tears.

"I...!"

"..."

"Do you know how much I have been looking for you in the past 12 years?"

It was hard to bear. In the end, Mercedes' tears emerged. It was because she realized that she was only an 'enemy' to Piaro as she watched Piaro hiding Grid behind his back.

"Every day... I was waiting every day. For the day when you would suddenly appear, telling me that the betrayal was a false accusation."

"..."

"But look at you now? My captain... Where did my captain go?!!!"

Mercedes' cry rang across the battlefield. Thanks to this, all the Red Knights saw Piaro.

"P-Piaro...?"

"No way... Why is Piaro here...?"

The chaos of battle stopped. Veradin and the Immortal members were baffled by this unexpected situation. Grid was also confused as he faced the Red Knights.

'Why are the Red Knights reacting like this?'

Grid knew that Piaro was kicked out of the empire 10 years ago. At that time, he heard that most of the Red Knights who followed Piaro were branded as traitors and killed. As a result, Grid regarded the current Red Knights as a group that had no relation to Piaro. Everyone else in the world was the same. Yet looking at their reactions, it seemed this wasn't the case.

Why?

Grid's question was resolved by Mercedes.

"Many boys and girls dreamt of seeing you."

"..."

"The young knights who devoted themselves to your teachings and gained great strength from them are now wearing red armor."

"..."

"No one has ever spoken your name, but we were all missing you. If you one day appeared before us and told us that you were framed and didn't betray the empire, I wanted you to come back."

At the very least, she wanted to hold the funeral. Mercedes' sad face and shaky voice gradually calmed down. The tears flowing down her cheeks completely dried up.

"But the traitor appeared alive before us."

The reason was because he was hiding behind the Overgeared King.

*Kwaduduk!*

Mercedes recovered from her confusion. Enormous anger filled her from the betrayal.

"I missed you... I wanted to believe you. Now I'm ashamed and embarrassed."

*Surung!*

Mercedes pulled out another sword. It wasn't until the double swords were grasped with both hands that Mercedes' strength was revealed.

"Overgeared King Grid, you have done the sin of sneaking a traitor into the empire. And the traitor... I will exterminate Piaro."

Mercedes' meaning was absolute to the Red Knights. Her declaration was a signal. The Red Knights, who hesitated after seeing Piaro, started attacked Kasim again. Meanwhile, Mercedes flew to Piaro and wielded her swords. Veradin and Immortal didn't miss this moment.

"Now!"

Immortal had been watching the strange atmosphere with unease. Now they started to act again. They summoned new undead to hit Grid's soldiers. Veradin shouted, "Grid! You have to summon all your knights right now!"

If he didn't want to lose the strongest farmer that the Overgeared Kingdom was proud of! Summon all the talents and lose everything in return!

Veradin, who believed in the power of the Red Knights and smiled with joy, didn't know. Piaro's Pounding Mortar that took off one of Great Demon Belial's arms. It was a power that a mere player couldn't afford.

"Piaro! How long will you play around? Are you still seeing me as a child?"

*Chaaeng! Chaeng!*

Mercedes spat out angrily at Piaro's clear disregard as he used his sickle and hand plow to block her swords.

“Pounding Mortar.”

*Kuooooooh!*

A pillar, or mortar, that was a size too big for humans to guess appeared in the night sky. It was gigantic enough to devour the bright moon that floated in the sky.

*Chill.*

The strong aura caused goosebumps. Mercedes and the Red Knights escaped, but the nervous Veradin and Immortal necromancers had low agility and were forced to stand in the wrong place. Yet they didn’t despair. Veradin was still smiling.

“It finally came. The legendary farmer’s strongest technique.” Veradin had watched the Belial raid video several times. It was to grasp the power of Grid, Kraugel and the Overgeared members. In the process, he analyzed Piaro and Pounding Mortar. “A wide range skill that deals physical damage in proportion to the target’s maximum health?”

He was certain. He believed that unless the skill dealt proportional damage, it couldn’t inflict a critical wound on Belial who had millions of health. The confident Veradin signalled to Immortals top rankers. They all took out new armor.

[The Armor of Great Weight has been equipped.]

[Armor of Great Weight]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 59/59 Defense: 579

\* Increases defense in proportion to the level of the wearer (1 defense per 3 levels).

\* Reduces physical damage by 9%.

\* Movement speed is fixed at 0 and moving isn’t possible.

\* Stamina is reduced by 20%.

\* Stamina will be reduced by 1 every 10 seconds.

The armor of the Pero people that was made to endure the raids of the Saharan Empire.

It increases the wearer's defense to the extreme. However, the armor is so heavy that wearing it is exhausting. The durability is lacking because it is designed only for high defense. Wearing it for too long isn't allowed.

Weight: 69,900

User Restriction: Level 250 or higher.

The worst armor that decreased stamina and made it impossible to move! However, the defensive power was high enough to exceed heavy armor.

"If we can endure this attack...!"

The death of the sub-rankers who couldn't obtain such armor wasn't a concern. Veradin calculated that he and the surviving top rankers could help Mercedes destroy Grid. Veradin and the necromancers took expensive buffing potions that temporarily boosted their defense.

*Kuwaaaaaaaang!*

Pounding Mortar fell. Piaro was aiming for the necromancers from the beginning. He knew that necromancers needed to be taken out when fighting an undead army.

"Kuahahat! Ha?"

Take a step forward. After a while, kill Grid.

Veradin and the necromancers laughing like crazy couldn't even scream as they were crushed.

[The Armor of Great Weight has been destroyed!]

[The Armor of Great Weight has been...!]

[The Armor of Great Weight has...!]

...

...

The heavy weight of the falling mortar contained a power that violated common sense. The armor that Veradin and the necromancers believed in was destroyed and their bodies and souls disappeared without a trace.

"..."

No one could open their mouths. They just gaped at the forest that disappeared. As the trees disappeared, ash-colored pillars scattered all over the night sky. The countless undead also turned to dust and returned to the ground. There was an awkward silence.

"As long as I am alive, no one can harm my king's body." Piaro declared to his confused enemies, including Mercedes. There was no trace of the old days. As Mercedes expected, Piaro recognized the Red Knights as an obvious enemy.

*Crack.*

Her heart hurt. The hero who taught her how to be a knight was a traitor aiming his sword... No, aiming his hand plow at them. It was awful. It made her wonder if a knight was such a fleeting existence. The Red Knights spoke to the pained-looking Mercedes.

"It's dangerous with just us alone."

"If we retreat... Even Captain Limit would understand."

Right now, Mercedes was the only solo number knight present. Meanwhile, Piaro seemed stronger than he did in the past. In addition, Grid and Kasim were formidable opponents. The Red Knights judged it was impossible to beat the enemies with their current power.

Mercedes nodded and gave a command, "Okay. Everyone retreat."

"Sir Mercedes...?"

"Who will guard your retreat?"

What did it mean to be alive? The captain she vowed a knight's oath to was forcing her to betray, rather than be loyal to the emperor, which her former teacher who taught her about a knight's oath was already a traitor. In the end, she would rather die than be corrupted.

Piaro smiled for the first time as he prepared for Mercedes' challenge.

"You are the same as ever."

There were those who didn't change under any circumstances. They were the ones who had strong convictions from the start.

"I can't break your will. Good. I will deal the end with my own hands."

Piaro was Grid's. He couldn't stand that Mercedes tried to harm Grid. He knew her talents and beliefs and decided to kill the girl he had raised as a seed. But Grid didn't allow it. It was because he witnessed the sadness in Piaro's face.

"Piaro, do you remember how I wished for you to be happy?"

"Your Majesty...?"

"Summon Knight, Asmophel."

The only key to getting rid of Piaro's bad name. The Red Knights were astonished when Grid shouted this name. Mercedes once again lost her soul.

# Chapter 787

12 years ago, Asmophel condemned Piaro and his loyalists as traitors. The fallen hero. Yes, after Piaro's betrayal, Asmophel was no longer a hero. After destroying his most precious friend Piaro, his fellow men, and their families with his own hands, he isolated himself in a mansion for many years, sinking into drugs and alcohol. It seemed like a ritual. A ritual to call death.

"...One day, you suddenly disappeared."

He might be ruined, but a splendid swordsman was still abducted. Did he do this? Mercedes was aware of Asmophel's ability despite his inaction and wasn't convinced. Therefore, she had only one guess.

"I thought it was a self-fabricated act."

"..."

The old hero Asmophel appeared in a pillar of light. Like the old days, he smiled at Mercedes with a noble and beautiful appearance.

"I thought that you wanted to turn away from a hellish life and left the empire to escape from the protection of the Red Knights."

She was sad. The knight who died for himself, not for his master, was no longer a knight. Mercedes felt sorrow that the hero who had been an idol like Piaro had transformed into a symbol of shame and corruption.

"Yes. I thought you were already dead."

However.

"You're alive. And you're by the traitor Piaro's side." Mercedes gripped her two swords with great strength. Blood was flowing down her hands as she started to tremble. "You were once a hero, yet you betrayed your country and your emperor to be with your friend?"

“...”

The key to resolving the misunderstanding just made things worse. But Grid wasn't worried. He knew that Asmophel would release the misconceptions as soon as he spoke.

“Mercedes, there are a few things to keep in mind.”

After responding to Grid's call, the silent Asmophel finally opened his mouth.

“The first one. The Red Knights didn't protect me, they watched me. You know the Fourth Knight, right?”

The Fourth Knight was different from the other Red Knights. It wasn't a position appointed by the emperor but one handed down.

“The Fourth Knight, a position designed to protect the Red Knights, became corrupted. It's my guess that the Fourth Knight is closely related to the Yatan Church. Dive, the one closest to Marie, was a black magician... In fact, he was Yatan's Seventh Servant and the subordinate of the Fourth Knight. The Red Knights who watched under the pretext of protection were the Fourth Knight's men.”

“...?”

It was an unbelievable story. The problem was that he claimed the person closest to the empress was a Yatan Servant. Didn't this mean that Empress Marie was related to the evil Yatan Church? Mercedes and the Red Knights didn't believe Asmophel.

“The empress can't be just anyone. The imperial family thoroughly investigated their origins and only welcome the cleanest women. How can the empress be related to the Yatan Church?”

“At first she was a clean girl. But the empress could no longer be clean the moment she was filled with the ambition to place her son on the throne. She held hands with the evil forces that serve the great demons. Humans are weak creatures to temptation.” Asmophel's expression was exhausted. “I'm also a weak creature of temptation.”

“...?”

“I fell for Marie's beauty. I had a relationship with her.”

"W-What...?"

Asmophel didn't use the excuse that his mental state had been weakened by the Yatan essence and that he was brainwashed. It was because of his feelings of inferiority toward Piaro that there was a gap in his mind for Yatan's essence to affect. It was his own fault in the first place.

"That's right. I had lost the qualification to be a knight from the beginning. I betrayed my country and the emperor. Piaro was purely a victim."

Asmophel's heart was shattered and his soul filled with shame every time he reminded himself of his sin. His guilt towards Piaro and his country was endlessly deep, like the depths of hell.

"That's right... I'm the one who betrayed the emperor, not Piaro and the Red Knights."

He didn't even deserve tears. Asmophel's eyes were bloodshot when he thought about it.

"I only wanted to cover up my sin... For my own sake, I framed my friends and comrades, murdering their families and lovers."

It was a terrible sin committed under the name of punishment. Asmophel's body trembled with pain, sorrow, and anger towards himself. But Asmophel didn't stop speaking. It was in order to reveal the hidden truth to the world. This was the only reason why Asmophel was currently living.

"Stop it."

Piaro, who had already forgiven Asmophel, tried to stop him. However, it was useless. Asmophel didn't stop. His trembling voice filled the ears of Mercedes and the Red Knights.

"The knight of the empire, the hero who you once admired and loved is still alive. Please get rid of all misconceptions about him and pour the hate and blame onto me."

"..."

What the hell was this person saying right now? The Red Knights couldn't follow the truth. However, Mercedes realized it instantly. Asmophel was telling the truth. In the

end, tears flowed down Mercedes' white cheeks. She was aware that Asmophel was still hiding the truth from her. If Asmophel was truly wicked, then Piaro wouldn't have forgiven him.

"You..."

Over the past 12 years, one hero lived in desperation and suffering from a false accusation while another hero was ruled by guilt. In the end, the source was Empress Marie and the Yatan Church. The moment she realized this.

'...I am the hero of your heroes.'

Grid was excited when he saw Mercedes' eyes. Now that she found out the truth, she had an obligation. It was to make the other Red Knights believe Asmophel's words. In order to do so...

"I need solid information to be convinced. We will go back to the empire and review the events from 12 years ago to determine if your words are true or false. Once I can be sure that your words are true..."

Mercedes stopped and turned her gaze towards the Red Knights. The confused Red Knights nodded with determined eyes. All of them believed in Mercedes.

"We will help you pursue charges against Empress Marie and punish her."

It was the duty of the empire and the emperor towards the two heroes.

'First, I need to investigate Captain Limit.'

Was he also on the empress' side? Or had he been affected by the Fourth Knight? There was a lot to do. Mercedes was in a rush and said to Piaro and Asmophel.

"Today I didn't see you. Later when we are reunited, I hope my sword doesn't turn towards you."

In her heart, she wanted to kneel down. She wanted to yell at them for making her feel resentment towards them over the years. But it wasn't possible. She couldn't change her attitude until the other Red Knights understood the truth. She bowed deeply to Grid.

"Overgeared King Grid, I want to apologize for our rudeness and to ask for understanding. Today's price will be paid later, even if I have to give up everything."

"Everything... Okay. I am looking forward to it."

Grid smiled as his heart thumped.

[Affinity with First Knight Mercedes of the Red Knights has increased by 20.]

It was due to this notification window. Grid knew that it was very difficult to raise affinity with this named NPC.

'This woman must've believed in Piaro and Asmophel. It will be a great contribution when the truth is revealed later.'

Perhaps Mercedes would fall into a crisis in the process. The opponent was the empress of the empire. There was a high chance that Mercedes would suffer a counterattack from the opponent and be labeled a traitor like Piaro. It was good from Grid's perspective. It might be an opportunity to take Mercedes away from the empire.

"Let's go."

Mercedes commanded the Red Knights and approached the aide guarding her horse far away. His name was Sky. A player. He was wearing a helmet, so Grid wasn't aware that he was a player.

'Kukukuk... It is a jackpot.'

Sky was excited about being able to glimpse a hidden episode of the Red Knights thanks to Grid. He was one step closer to his grand ambition of making Mercedes his slave.

'I have to reach the empress at the right timing. Grid, thank you. Kukukuk!'

Satisfy wasn't a microcosm world, but a world itself. Politics and betrayal were rampant and there were more than a few wicked people. It was impossible for only one person to survive in this huge world where there were conflicting goals between the two billion players. Sky thought like this and it was right.

"Kasim."

-Yes.

"Go after the witness who overheard the conversation between Mercedes and Asmophel."

*-Are you talking about the aide of the First Knight...? What if I'm discovered by the First Knight?*

"It doesn't matter. Mercedes will understand. In the worst case, she might stop the assassination, but she will also dismiss the aide. In the future, she also has to be careful."

*-I understand.*

The current Grid had the power to go beyond reason. His journey to transcend the category of a legend wasn't over yet.

# Chapter 788

The Overgeared Kingdom was the strongest player force in the game and a threat to anyone. It was a basic thing to target them. There were countless people trying to keep the Overgeared Kingdom in check. But Grid wasn't aware of this fact. He overlooked the fate of the strong. He didn't properly defend his kingdom during the National Competition and allowed the enemy to enter.

Grid thought that Khan's sad end was the result of his own stupidity. Khan was the victim of his ignorance.

After Khan's death, Grid became obsessed with wisdom. If he had been a bit wiser, Khan's end wouldn't have been so lonely. Therefore, Grid challenged being reborn as a wise man. The accumulation of knowledge was slow because of his innate intelligence, but Grid believed that by repeatedly thinking 'infinite' times, he could use his own merits and patience to become a wise man. No, he decided not to believe, but to put it in action.

This was the result. Grid was thinking nonstop. He lacked intelligence compared to others, so he had to think many times more than others. He continued and continued to think whenever facing a situation. His head was constantly working.

Why did he summon only Piaro when he was attacked by the Red Knights and Immortal? It was because Agnus couldn't be seen. As a result, Grid thought that the Red Knights and Immortal members attacking him might be bait. If he caught the bait and summoned all his knights, his kingdom would be weakened and the empty house could be destroyed. That's why he first summoned Piaro.

It was this same context that Grid used to judge that Mercedes' aide should be handled. The reason why Grid was concerned about the aide wasn't because he was smart, but because he was thinking.

Grid was exhausted. It was different from when he chose without worrying, acted emotionally, and depended on others. The energy consumption of this mindset was enormous.

*Sururuk.*

Kasim disappeared into the darkness.

"Sigh."

Grid leaned his exhausted body against the carriage. It was like he had just raided a powerful boss monster. Piaro measured his condition and bowed deeply.

"You went through a lot of trouble."

Piaro was proud of Grid. Rather than being frustrated by Khan's death, Grid honored Khan by looking at himself. Grid had done well when facing the emperor. Piaro had this type of belief.

Grid asked the smiling Piaro, "Was I right to handle the aide?"

Grid had witnessed the discipline of the Red Knights. They were shaken by Piaro's appearance, but immediately executed Mercedes' orders. They doubted Asmophel's story, but didn't resist Mercedes' judgment. Grid believed that the Red Knights in this place wouldn't talk about Piaro and Asmophel. But the aide was unknown. It was difficult to judge what type of person the aide was when he protected the horses in the distance. That's why Grid ordered Kasim to handle him.

Piaro nodded. "Mercedes will decide on her own. She will sort out the trustworthy and untrustworthy knights and aides."

"You trust her."

"She's an incredibly smart girl."

That's why she was his seed.

"And she grew to my expectations. She will later become a new pillar of the empire."

In fact, Piaro was very surprised when he was called by Grid and met Mercedes. He hadn't thought she was alive. It was natural. Didn't the brainwashed Asmophel destroy all of the Red Knights in the past? Asmophel wouldn't leave anyone to hit him in the back. It was difficult to expect that Mercedes, a seed of Piaro, would've survived.

But Asmophel saved Mercedes. The reason...

'In his subconscious, he was afraid for the empire.'

Asmophel was reluctant to kill talent even in his brainwashed days. That was Mercedes. Piaro looked up at the night sky.

"I have become greedier because of your words." Grid declared, "I'm going to make Mercedes mine."

Grid faced an unprecedeted pressure when competing with Mercedes. He felt like she was reading all his actions. At first, he thought it was just her excellent skills, but looking back, it wasn't. It was clear that she 'predicted' his behavior.

'A scam.' Grid asserted.

Mercedes was in the same class as Piaro. A wall that normal players could never cross. A transcendent named NPC. Grid wanted to make her his own person. Piaro thought the same. When he exchanged blows with Mercedes, he thought the only way to overthrow her was Fated to Perish.

'Once more time passes...'

She would grow to a level of rejecting Fated to Perish. Piaro's greed grew.

"That's right, Your Majesty. She must be gathered by Your Majesty."

"Um."

Grid nodded. He swallowed down the question of whether Piaro yearned for the empire and his country. He trusted Piaro.

"Let's return to Reinhardt."

Grid thought that it was highly unlikely the empire was behind this raid. It was highly likely the empress was the mastermind. But the issue was too big to judge for himself. He had to quickly meet Lauel. Grid immediately climbed into the carriage.

'I'm tired.'

This one day in the empire was like a year. Grid sat on the seat and his eyes moved towards the window. Asmophel entered his gaze. Asmophel was walking on the right

side of the carriage with a pained expression.

'His guilt has gone beyond his heart and imprinted in his soul.'

Salvation would be difficult. Piaro might've forgiven him, but the dead Red Knights and their families couldn't. As Grid predicted, Asmophel was willing to end his life the moment he got revenge on the empress.

'...Wait.' Grid made a sad expression only to come up with something. 'Did all the Red Knights really die?'

The rebels who followed the traitor Piaro. This was the evaluation of the previous generation of Red Knights. Grid heard that 'most' of the Red Knights were executed. Yes, most of them. It wasn't all of them. Some were still surviving as fugitives.

'Maybe I can give Asmophel a chance to atone?'

Grid didn't delay. He immediately gave an order to Asmophel, "Asmophel, travel through the continent and find the survivors of the Red Knights."

"Huh? W-What...?"

Surprise and fear. Asmophel's face turned grey from the unexpected command.

Grid stared into his wavering gaze and explained, "I will absorb the previous generation of the Red Knights. It isn't impossible to absorb them. Isn't that right?"

"You want to gather the survivors of the old Red Knights?"

"Yes."

"Is it really appropriate for me to be the one to find them? Why are you leaving it to me instead of Piaro...?"

Asmophel stopped talking. He grasped Grid's intent but he didn't dare say the word 'atonement.' He bowed his head with a dark expression.

"Piaro forgave you."

"..."

"Won't the others be the same? They will all feel like Piaro."

"..."

"Find them. Then talk to them."

Asmophel could only think that the command to 'find the old Red Knights' was purely out of concern for himself. It was also a chance to bring the 'power of the previous generation' to the kingdom. It was an example that showed Grid's mindset of thinking about his precious people, which was the greatest driving force behind the Overgeared Kingdom.

"Always be happy."

"..."

"This is the dying wish I received from Khan. Let us try to be happy together."

"...I will keep that in mind."

Asmophel stopped walking and bowed deeply. He didn't raise his head until the carriage that Grid was in had disappeared from view.

Piaro cheered for Asmophel on his journey of atonement.

'Have strength.'

Please come back with old friends.

◊ ◊ ◊

[Hwan Kingdom's Resident (1)]

★ Hidden Quest ★

You have to meet the minimal qualifications to challenge the Chiyou test.

First, go beyond the level of an ordinary person.

Quest Clear Condition (1): Don't die until you reach level 400.

\* Every time you gain 20 levels without dying while the quest is ongoing, you will gain a large number of additional stats.

\* If you die, you will lose all the additional stats you have acquired. The lost stats can't be restored.

\* If you die, the quest clear conditions will change to number two.

Quest Clear Condition (2): The number of deaths must be less than 5 until you achieve level 400 (Number of Deaths: 2/5).

\* This is the last chance. If you fail to complete the second clear conditions, you will completely lose your qualification to challenge the Chiyou test.

In the past, Veradin visited the East Continent and completely focused on the yangbans of the Hwan Kingdom. He anticipated that he could benefit from the greatest power on the East Continent. As a result, he was the first player to visit the Hwan Kingdom and received the hidden quest to become a 'yangban.'

It was because he gave off a good impression to the yangbans. At that time, Veradin was level 290. He tried hard to go over level 300 without dying and secured a tremendous amount of stats as a result. But it was all blown away. He touched the Overgeared Kingdom and died two times already.

"Maybe..."

Veradin gulped with a pale complexion. Grid's words 'the first time' constantly revolved in his head. Grid really would try to find and kill Veradin many times.

"...In the meantime, I will hide."

Veradin always believed he was better than others. For a person who manipulated other people, Grid and his items that violated common sense caused him to feel a new shock and horror. He didn't want to face Grid anytime soon. It was the first time that Veradin feared another person.

'I can't believe I'm feeling like this towards an ordinary person...!'

*Kwaduduk!*

Anger filled Veradin's body. He suddenly had a question. It was about the reaction of the Red Knights to the farmer summoned by Grid.

'Why did they look so shocked?'

The necromancers were in the rear of the battlefield. They were too far away so Veradin couldn't hear the conversation. This was bad.

'There is something. Something.....'

Maybe the key to breaking the current crisis was the farmer? Veradin looked at new possibilities.

At the same time, the outskirts of Titan.

*Chaeeng!*

Mercedes' sword blocked a dagger flying through the darkness. Sky belatedly realized that his neck would've been pierced if Mercedes hadn't acted and hurriedly raised his shield. Mercedes looked into the darkness.

"Tell the Overgeared King I know what he's concerned about. Please let me handle it."

-... *Understood.*

"...?"

A chill went down Sky's spine as a gloomy voice was heard from the darkness.

'What? Why was I on the brink of being assassinated?'

Mercedes said to the frightened Sky, "As of today, you are dismissed."

"Yes...?"

"You can never set foot in the imperial palace again."

"W-What is this...?!"

What the hell was this all of a sudden? It happened when Sky was confused and going

to ask for an explanation.

[You have lost your qualifications for the second class ‘First Knight’s Aide.’]

[All Red Knights quests currently in progress will be destroyed.]

[You are denied entry to the imperial palace.]

[The 7 points of affinity built up with Mercedes have been reset to 0.]

“Eh...? Eh eh?”

Sky trembled from the unbelievable reality. He was worried that Mercedes had noticed the darkness inside him. After a while, he was left alone. Sky reflected on this incident and realized that Grid was behind it. He had to think about the circumstances.

“You...! You son of a bitch!”

Sky felt extreme anger at Grid because he could no longer fulfill his goal of making Mercedes his slave. But after a moment.

“C-Crazy...”

Sky started to feel fear instead of anger. He feared Grid’s transcendent power that could destroy one person’s life so easily. The presence of the new and matured king was too great to compare to the previous one.

# Chapter 789

"Did you handle it properly?"

"Yes. We didn't hide our identities and attacked."

"Hrmm... why is there no response?"

It had been a week since Grid returned home. It meant it had been a week since the Red Knights and Immortal attacked him. However, the Overgeared Kingdom still hadn't announced any stance.

"Despite their king being attacked, they didn't even announce it, let alone react..."

They wouldn't have hidden it because of fear. Then they must be up to something.

*Dok dok.*

Limit tapped the table and frowned.

"Did they see our intentions?"

The Overgeared Kingdom could be aware that the empire was starting to split into the emperor and empress. If the Overgeared Kingdom had a capable schemer, they could've discovered that the empress was behind the attack rather than the emperor.

"A tough opponent."

It was correct to say that the plan to use the Overgeared Kingdom to weaken the emperor was in vain.

"It didn't work out easily."

Limit determined and glanced at Mercedes. It was a signal to leave. Mercedes sighed with relief after leaving the office.

'For Captain, His Majesty is definitely an enemy.'

After meeting Piaro and Asmophel and finding out the truth. Mercedes had been looking at Sword Duke Limit for the past week. She thoroughly investigated how far Limit intervened in the tragedy that occurred 12 years ago. However, was it that easy to investigate a duke?" The more she tried to access about Limit, the more interference she faced. One of them was the Fourth Knight.

"Sir Mercedes."

"Sir Gyuratan?"

The position of the 'Fourth Knight' in the Red Knights was special. He played the role of defending the Red Knights from outsiders and performed the work of an inspector in peacetime. The Fourth Knight must constantly observe and watch the Red Knights so that the essence of the Red Knights didn't fade.

12 years ago, Fourth Knight Gyuratan ruled that Piaro was a traitor. Mercedes trusted Piaro, so she didn't like Gyuratan from the start. She doubted him. However, now she felt hatred and hostility instead of just suspicion. The true darkness that collapsed the Red Knights. A figure closely related to the Yatan Church. Thanks to Asmophel, she became aware of Gyuratan's reality.

Mercedes smiled as she faced Gyuratan in the hallway. She didn't expose any hostility. The basics of a swordsman was to control their emotions.

"It has been a long time."

"I have been away for a while. I was conducting a review on the death of Third Knight Lorex and Fifth Knight Dia."

"..."

Lorex and Dia. They were both killed by the Undefeated King's descendant. They also missed Piaro. Mercedes had briefly thought about Lorex and Dia when she met Piaro a week ago.

If Lorex and Dia were still alive... if they knew the truth...

'They would've cried all night from joy and sorrow.'

They would've been a great strength. Mercedes was missing the colleagues she

couldn't meet again when Gyuratan's voice entered her ears.

"In the course of the investigation, I accidentally stumbled on your traces. Sir Mercedes, it seems like you were in Valhalla for a while?"

"..."

"Did you go after the Undefeated King's descendant to get revenge for your colleagues?"

"...That's right."

"The result?"

"I didn't get revenge. I couldn't find the Undefeated King's descendant."

Mercedes fought directly against the descendant of the Undefeated King in Lubana and knew him. It meant she was familiar with the characteristics of the Undefeated King's descendant. But despite infiltrating Valhalla for two months, she couldn't find a person who could be considered the Undefeated King's descendant.

"You disobeyed a command and couldn't even get revenge... If you were able to get revenge, I might've asked for leniency from the emperor. Now it isn't possible."

"What now?"

"What should I do? Should I report to His Majesty that you violated an order?"

"You...!"

"Don't forget. The First Knight should be an inspiration to all knights of the empire. But didn't you disobey his command and act according to your own will? I can't overlook it."

"Uh...!"

"If another order comes again, don't violate it. Even if you are the First Knight, His Majesty won't overlook it."

'At this point, I need to investigate the tragedy of 12 years ago... '

It was the worst. Why was her mistake noticed at this timing? She had no luck.

'No... It isn't a coincidence.'

Mercedes realized it. This timing, Gyuratan intended it.

'It's likely that he knew I violated the order from the beginning.'

But he buried it until it was appropriate to be used, like now.

'He knows that I have started to doubt the tragedy of 12 years ago.'

She could no longer hide her hostility. Mercedes glared at Gyuratan, who just laughed and shrugged.

"Well, don't worry about the Red Knights. Sir Lucas and I will manage them very well. Ah, Sir Lucas was arrested? Then I will manage them alone."

"..."

She wanted to let out a flurry of curses. No, she wanted to tear out his throat. Mercedes felt a strong killing desire, but endured it. She couldn't do anything to him before she found out the truth and revealed it to the world.

◊ ◊ ◊

"Let's put it all together."

The capital of the Overgeared Kingdom, Reinhardt.

Lael started writing on the blackboard. At the top was the name Garam, the yangban.

"The yangbans are defined as having the best strength, the dukes of the empire are advanced level, First Knight Mercedes is lower advanced, Asmophel is of the intermediate level and Your Majesty and Kraugel are below him?"

"That's right."

"Piaro? Isn't he the best?"

"When looking at his level, it's logical to classify him as lower advanced like Mercedes. Mercedes actually competed with Piaro."

"But what if Piaro used Fated to Perish?"

"Among the named NPCs, there are many who can resist Fated to Perish... Hmm, but there is deadly damage even if it is resisted. Piaro is classified as on the same level as the seven dukes."

"Being below the yangbans even when taking Fated to Perish in consideration..."

It was very important to know the power pyramid of the world. Lauel looked at the blackboard with a serious expression.

"By the way. If Garam was so strong, how did you get away from him?"

"Didn't I tell you? He was absent-minded and God's Command fortunately activated, allowing me to repeat Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle twice."

"Then..." Lauel erased Grid's name at the bottom of the board. Then he wrote Grid between the yangbans and the seven dukes. "What do you think about this location?"

"..."

"Your Majesty." Was this a joke? Lauel saw Grid's questioning eyes and spoke seriously. "It's good to be cautious but please don't lose sight of your ambitions."

"I haven't lost sight of my ambitions. I made a realistic self-diagnosis after thinking about it deeply."

"Isn't it funny to unconditionally trust your thoughts? You're not smart, are you?"

"..."

"You're much stronger than what you measured yourself as." Lauel was convinced. "Raise your level. Keep your level higher than named NPCs and equip yourself with your items."

"What are you talking about? Don't you know how fast named NPCs raise their level?"

The level of NPCs would naturally rise with the passage of time due to the compensation effect when the average level of the players rose. It was a basic rule, not common sense, that a player could never catch up with the level of a named NPC. But Lauel had a different opinion.

"Did you forget how fast your level up speed is? The named NPCs become stronger in proportion to the average level of the players. Isn't it possible to raise your level much higher than the average?"

"..."

"Starting today, use your God Hands, Noe, Randy, and the Overgeared Skeletons to make infinite hunting macros. In particular, the Overgeared Skeletons. How long do you want to leave them as useless skeletons? If I had them then I would've already made them into a death knight or lich."

"..."

Lauel's words were right. In the meantime, Grid had neglected the importance of level and he also failed to utilize the Overgeared Skeletons. But why did he feel like squeezing Lauel? Grid tried to calm his boiling anger while Lauel gave advice.

"In addition, don't forget to constantly think during combat."

Train to repeat the infinite thoughts even during dire moments.

"You'll become better than a genius."

"It's hard to use my mind because I have a stone head. It's particularly hard to think while moving the body." Grid grumbled.

"Real stones don't think. Calling you a stone head is... No, I'm sorry."

"Can I hit you?"

"I'm sorry!"

Lauel regretted talking without thinking. He knew that if he received one hit from Grid, he would die!

◊ ◊ ◊

A fortnight after the end of the 3rd National Competition. An item that the medalists were waiting for entered their inventory.

[3rd National Competition Medal Reward]

It was a gift box containing the items that the medalists wished for. Of course, Grid wanted the production materials.

[The Blue Dragon's Breath has been acquired.]

[The White Tiger's Breath has been acquired.]

[The Black Tortoise's Breath has been acquired.]

“Good.”

Grid smiled as he got the rewards for Battlefield and his two gold medals. Maybe this was just before the birth of a new myth rated item. He couldn't not feel exhilarated.

[Blue Dragon's Breath]

Contains the blessing of the blue dragon.

It will increase lightning resistance by 30%.

It can be used to infuse items with the powerful aura of the blue dragon.

However, it can only be attached to items with a strong lightning attribute.

Weight: 2

[White Tiger's Breath]

Contains the blessing of the white tiger.

It will increase earth resistance by 30%.

It can be used to infuse items with the powerful aura of the white tiger.

However, it can only be attached to items with a strong earth attribute.

Weight: 2

[Black Tortoise's Breath]

Contains the blessing of the black tortoise.

It will increase water resistance by 30%.

It can be used to infuse items with the powerful aura of the black tortoise.

However, it can only be attached to items with a strong water attribute.

Weight: 2

“Very good!”

Grid was filled with joy as he held the beautiful blue, white, and black beads. He was excited by the thought of strengthening these three breaths and upgrading his items, just like he strengthened the Red Phoenix's Breath.

‘Let’s quickly become stronger!’

He was filled with enthusiasm! Grid was grasping the hammer with blazing eyes when a guest arrived.

“Grid, keep your promise.”

“...You?”

The guest was surprising. It was the sky above the sky. Sword Saint Kraugel. He was staring at Grid with a radiant look that didn’t match his normal image.

"Will you make me a sword?"

"Y-Yes..."

Had he been waiting for this day? Kraugel appeared as soon as the reward arrived. It seemed he had been waiting in Reinhardt.

'He has a cute side.'

Grid smiled as Kraugel told him good news.

"Recently, I have found a good hunting ground. I'll let you know if you want."

"Ah, thank you..."

"You should rest for 10 minutes every time you hunt a monster."

They were meaningful words.

'How high is the difficulty of this hunting ground?'

Grid was filled with anticipation and tension.

"Speaking of which, I killed 52 people from Immortal. In return, can you make me armor and boots?"

"...5-50?"

"52 people. I lived in Titan for a while. I can show you the proof shots if you want."

"..."

Truly the sky above the sky. Tremendous skills were a default for him.

Grid received two breaths and a small amount of adamantium from Kraugel. Kraugel's eyes were gentle as he watched Grid start a fire in the furnace.

'He seems to be overcoming the wound. It's fortunate.'

# Chapter 790

The Hwan Kingdom's national wood. The White Phosphorus Tree, also known as the Eternal Tree, was burned as firewood. The overwhelming momentum of the flames instantly filled the smithy.

'His Majesty has started working!'

The attention of the blacksmiths concentrated on Grid. The blacksmiths knew that the person who could control the flames, heat, and temperature so completely was only Grid since Khan died.

'Khan's latter years.'

'He dealt with the flames as brilliantly as His Majesty... '

The eyes of the blacksmiths reddened as they started reminiscing.

"Kraugel, there are three options."

Grid took out a hammer and anvil and started to explain to Kraugel.

"First of all, if you have a specific item you want then give me the production method. Then I will learn the design and make the item for you. You already know right? The performance of the items I make is higher than that shown in the design."

From Grid's standpoint, it was a great benefit because he could acquire new designs for free.

"Secondly, you can leave the design entirely to me. In this case, I will make items based on the production methods I already have."

"It's really wonderful."

"That's right. In this case, you can have something created by a legendary blacksmith."

"Of course I..."

Kraugel was interested in the second way. It was a natural choice since he knew the power of the sword weapons that Grid used. But Grid gave him a third option.

"No, listen to my words."

Grid interrupted Kraugel's mouth and thought about Khan. How much help did he get from Khan every time he made a new item? In particular, Khan's opinions were great when making new items. The best blacksmith that Grid respected helped Grid with his knowledge and insight. Khan thought about what materials should be used for newly created items, what characteristics should be included and so on.

Now the role that Grid wanted Kraugel to play was Khan's role. Grid wanted Kraugel's knowledge. Grid was convinced he would be a great help in making the strongest sword.

"Kraugel, what do you think is the ideal shape for a sword?"

"...?"

"Tell me. I will realize your ideals with my skills."

"...This is the third way?"

"Yes."

*Duguen!*

Kraugel's heart thumped as he met Grid's eyes. His Swordsmanship Creation skill passed through his head. Since he had a unique skill that could create new sword techniques, the blacksmith Grid would have an item creation skill.

*Kkuok.*

Kraugel formed fists to calm his trembling body.

"In the history of the Overgeared King... My name will be part of your history that will be worshipped in later generations. Is it okay?"

It was a very prudent question. Kraugel had met many people and he knew that people clung to their feats as they rose higher. They wanted to keep other people from

appearing in their feats.

Grid's answer was simple. "Is it okay? Is that a question? It isn't okay, it's an honor."

Grid remembered. At the time of the Belial raid, he saw Kraugel learn Piaro's technique. It was the best tribute that Kraugel could show to Piaro. Now Grid was paying homage to Kraugel.

"The best blacksmith will make the best sword with the best swordsman. Won't another great legend be born?"

"..."

"Let's make it together. The strongest sword. The best legend."

Undefeated King Madra fought for his kingdom all his life but in the end, he lost his head to his son. Pagma betrayed a friend due to his sense of duty to save the world and contracted with a great demon. Braham realized the absurdity of the world and despised his own people, but after he became a human, Braham was betrayed by his friend because he was a vampire.

The tales of the legends that Grid knew were all sad and vilified. Grid didn't want to be like them. Kraugel was the same.

"...It's a great honor"

"Okay. Then let's begin." Legendary Blacksmith's Creation."

[Legendary Blacksmith's Creation]

You can create three equipment item production methods every time the skill level of the 'Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill' goes up.

Number of items that can be created at present: 9/24.]

\* When items are produced using this skill, the name of the creator is automatically placed on the item.

*Jiing-*

A blank blueprint appeared in front of him.

"I think the ideal sword using the knowledge of a Sword Saint..."

The blueprint had a huge black space.

"It's different from person to person, but it's generally a heavy sword. It's the easiest to use in terms of width, length, and weight, thus having high utility. Considering all the variables. It's the least inconvenient to use."

"Really? I thought it was a long sword. In fact, the Enlightenment Sword is a long sword. It is a sword that emits black flames."

"Have you ever used a heavy sword?"

"I don't like it. I've always used a greatsword or a long sword..."

"...Well, as I said, the ideal form is different for each individual. In the first place, it might be arrogant to discuss an ideal form. When cutting fruit, a knife is the best. When walking through a jungle, a machete is the best. There are differences depending on the application."

The experiences and knowledge of a Sword Saint combined with the knowledge and skills of the legendary blacksmith.

"But universally, a heavy sword is better in combat? Are there any other special features?"

"No."

"Do you intend to add another option by giving the sword a distinct shape?"

"Like the shark that is part of Failure?"

"Yes."

"If you don't know, the basic form of the sword is good. It is more important to have the balance of the sword be even than to have the center of gravity to one side."

"The answer is correct. This is why the cross section of the sword is a diamond shape."

"Section?"

"The cutting surface you see when you cut with the sword. The balance is important so a perfect diamond as the cutting surface is preferred. On the other hand, I prefer a hexagon or octagon."

"I don't know anything about these details."

"You don't know about me."

"...?"

"I'm a legendary blacksmith. Even if I put special decorations on the blade, I can perfectly balance it. I can do it with my skills. So tell me what you are thinking. What features do you want?"

"This is interesting..."

*Buzz buzz.*

The blacksmiths gathered near Grid and Kraugel started to make a disturbance. It was surprising that a black-eyed man with a good face was sharing his thoughts with their king.

"This...?"

The four biggest blacksmiths from Pangea, including White, were the most surprised. They remembered that Kraugel was the 'Little Hero' of Pangea. The Kraugel they remembered was a great warrior. Yes, he wasn't a blacksmith. Nevertheless, Grid was listening to Kraugel's opinions.

'Why?'

Was he qualified to replace Khan's vacancy? The blacksmiths questioned it.

"He is a saint with a sword."

"...?"

"The first Sword Saint after Muller?"

"...!!"

The youngest blacksmith, Panmir, announced the true identity of the black-eyed man. The stir was huge. The blacksmiths were astounded as they saw a prominent figure in a totally unexpected place. As they were at a loss for words, Panmir gave his opinion.

"Wouldn't the two of them make the best sword in history?"

No one was able to reject Panmir's opinion. The expectations about what sword would be born from the combined knowledge, experiences, and techniques of the legendary blacksmith and Sword Saint were great.

"But..." White was feeling admiration when he felt a sense of incongruity and asked, "Panmir, have you gathered all the firewood for today?"

"...I will go and come back to see His Majesty's sword."

It was very sad. Panmir pouted. He was the youngest blacksmith in the smithy despite being the 1st ranked blacksmith.

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Over three hours. This was the time it took Grid and Kraugel to coordinate their opinions. They finally finished the shape of the sword. Now all that was left were the materials.

"The Blue Dragon's Breath and White Tiger's Breath..."

Grid confirmed the two breaths that Kraugel had.

"Will the sword use the Blue Dragon's Breath? Then I have to use a mineral compatible with the lightning attribute."

"No, I want my sword to contain the White Tiger's Breath."

"What?" Grid was confused. "Isn't the white tiger of the earth attribute?"

The earth attribute was related to a higher defense. It was common for the earth

attribute to create options for a higher defense. Meanwhile, the lightning attribute was good for speed and power. Generally, it gave options for increasing attack power. In other words, the breath most suitable for a weapon was the blue dragon, not the white tiger.

"Why are you using a white tiger breath for your weapon? Isn't it better for armor? Shouldn't you use the White Tiger's Breath for armor?"

"No, this adamantium that I gathered is for armor. The Blue Dragon's Breath will be attached to the boots to increase the overall speed."

"But still. Isn't it hard to expect overwhelming attack power if you attach the White Tiger's Breath to the weapon? Shouldn't a weapon have high attack power? Look at the blueprint. You can expect to have additional defense options just from the form of the sword. But you want to increase your defense even more?"

"Just as speed is linked with power, weight is also directly linked to power. For example, Chris' 1,000 ton Sword."

"...Ah." Grid's common sense was broken. "Minerals with the earth attribute are generally harder and heavier... Do you think you can use that weight to exert a higher attack power?"

"Yes, I believe that if the White Tiger's Breath is used well, you can complete the best sword that combines high attack power and defense."

"That's a possible interpretation."

If he looked at magic as an example, the power of earth magic wasn't very weak. In particular, magic of the stone crushing series was very powerful.

"A weapon with the earth property..."

A smile crossed Grid's face. Once he heard Kraugel's words, he wondered about the results of earth-based weapons.

'It will be easy to name the item.'

A sword with strong earth attributes. A sword made of stone. Then he would try it.

"Okay. Let's finish the Stone Sword."

'Stone Sword?'

What was the Stone Sword? A chill went down Kraugel's spine.

Overgeared Guild, Overgeared Kingdom, Overgeared King... Grid's naming sense was the worst.

"Wait a minute, Grid."

"The material will be stone. We can sometimes replace it with bloodstone."

The mass production of the sword. A sword made of stone would be ideal for the Overgeared knights while the version made of bloodstone would be ideal for Grid and the Overgeared members. Yes, from the time that he asked Kraugel to cooperate with the item creation, Grid was aiming to improve the overall strength of the kingdom. Imagine the Overgeared knights and the soldiers using a sword designed by a Sword Saint. It would be overwhelming.

"The name of the item."

"Hey Grid..."

"Stone Sword."

"..."

Kraugel couldn't understand Grid's naming sense. He should be glad of one fact. There was room for various modifiers to be added to the items that Grid produced. Yes, the name of the sword used by Kraugel in the future wasn't likely to be a simple Stone Sword. Especially when it was a sword with the White Tiger's Breath attached.

However, Kraugel didn't know this fact and was filled with deep despair.

# Chapter 791

[Do you want to name the item Stone Sword?]

“...No, wait.”

Grid, who was flowing with the momentum, suddenly stopped. He realized that the name of Stone Sword is inadequate. Was it because he heard the sighs of Kraugel and the blacksmiths? No. The cause of Grid's current enlightenment was the armour he was wearing.

Khan's posthumous work, Valhalla. It was the armor Grid had never taken off since Khan died.

‘The name of the item is important. I need to think carefully and decide.’

Why did Khan call the armor Valhalla? In fact, Grid didn't find much meaning in it. It was modelled after the Valhalla armor made by Albatino, Khan's ancestor. Grid just through that the name was copied from that. But he found out later. One of the other meanings of Valhalla was ‘house of joy’.

‘Thanks to this, I was able to get a glimpse of Khan's heart.’

Khan was hoping that Grid would be a huge house-like entity that could embrace many people and give them joy.

‘Yes, the name is important.’

Grid's thinking, which had been biased towards the design and function of the item, started to activate. Grid recalled Luel's advice to ‘always think.’ If Khan's name was simply Iron Armor, Grid wouldn't have felt the same way he did now. He recognized the weight of the name.

‘In the first place... ’

This was a work he made with his friend. It was insincere to his friend to give it a name

like this.

"I'll correct it."

Stone Sword. Grid's imposing voice resonated with the blacksmiths who were silent with shock from the name.

"Muksabal." (*TL: Generally acorn jelly in a chilled broth. But it can also be slang for badly damaging or disfiguring a face i.e. beating to a pulp*).

"...?"

"The sword's name will be Muksabal."

From a general point of view, the power of the earth was close to the symbol of 'guardian.' However, Hero King Grid and Sword Saint Kraugel were monsters of a level that could wield the ground. The 'land' they wielded would overwhelm the enemy with its weight.

"That's why it is Muksabal."

"...Is it really possible to pull up the ground?"

"..."

Panmir forgot the concept of an analogy and asked. Due to this, the solemn (?) atmosphere became awkward, but Grid didn't mind.

"Kraugel, I don't doubt that our knowledge, skills, and experience will greatly damage our enemies. Muksabal... It's a name I carefully thought of. I wish you can hear it in your heart."

"...Yes. I won't speak long words."

There were too many parts to tackle. But Grid looked so serious that Kraugel couldn't refute it.

Just.

'I should introduce it with a different name.'

He could only think of it like this.

◊ ◊ ◊

[Design: Muksabal]

Rating: Epic ~ Legendary

Epic Rating Information:

Durability: 455~790 Attack Power: 390~650 Defense: 100~188

\* The options are unforeseen.

Unique Rating Information:

Durability: 667~980 Attack Power: 493~817 Defense: 140~246

\* The options are unforeseen.

Legendary Rating Information:

Durability: ??? Attack Power: ??? Defense: ???

\* The options are unforeseen.

A weapon design from Blacksmith Grid, who has gone beyond a legend and is becoming a myth, and Sword Saint Kraugel.

It is in the form of a sword, with a knuckle bow at the handle. The purpose is to protect the hands. The knuckle bow is designed as a miniature crown and looks great. The top part of the handle extends from side to side, giving the illusion that there are two handles. The special sword will allow for anomalous attacks and will also defend against enemy attacks.

The material of the sword is the 10,000 year stone or bloodstone and will vary significantly depending on the material.

The weight is so heavy that people with low strength can't swing it. However, it's a very ideal sword with no flaws in its balance.

Weight: 6,800~13,900

Conditions of Use: Unforeseen

'If I make it with the 10,000 year stone, the minimum stats will be applied. When made with bloodstone, the maximum stats will apply. On the other hand, the weight will be overwhelmingly high when I use the 10,000 year stone.'

Grid's face blossomed like a flower as he confirmed the finished design. He didn't know exactly what the options were yet, but it was a very good weapon when just looking at the attributes. Wasn't an epic rated one-handed sword guaranteed at least 390 attack power and 100 defense? It was hard to find a comparable performance among the level 300 items.

'In addition, the level limit of Muksabal is likely to be very low.'

The ideal sword that Kraugel thought about was a 'wearable sword' and Grid also focused on Kraugel's ideals. In other words, it had high versatility and practicality. There was a high weight due to the characteristics of the materials, but those who had the minimum strength would be able to handle Muksabal easily.

'The high cost of the 10,000 year stone will mean it will take a long time before I can distribute it to the soldiers... Let's distribute it to the knights first.'

It was a powerful weapon that couldn't be compared to the mass-produced Grid weapons. The unique rated Muksabal was superior to the attack power of many legendary weapons. It was clear that the strength of the Overgeared Knights would grow by leaps and bounds.

Grid was delighted and now the most important task remained. It was to produce it.

"Kraugel, give me the White Tiger's Breath."

"Yes."

A material that couldn't be obtained unless a hidden quest on the East Continent was cleared or a gold medal was won in the National Competition. Kraugel handled the white bead that was worth an astronomical amount to Grid without hesitation. In front of the blast furnace where the white phosphorus wood was still burning, Grid

was reminded of the time he made the Red Phoenix Bow and the Enlightenment Sword.

‘The basic premise for making a myth rated weapon is strengthening the core materials.

With the Red Phoenix Bow, he strengthened the Red Phoenix Breath and with the Enlightenment Sword, he strengthened Belial’s Horn. Looking back now, it was very hard work. It would take at least three days, the long task of hammering on one item for a week and even delicate techniques. It was physically and mentally hard.

The biggest problem was the ‘resistance’ of the item. The Red Phoenix’s Breath emitted hot fire every time it was hit with a hammer while Belial’s Horn exploded. If Grid didn’t have the combination of high defense and stamina, it would be impossible to strengthen both the Red Phoenix Breath and Belial’s Horn. He would’ve been dead after hammering a few times!

‘The White Tiger’s Breath will also resist.’

It could take more than a week for smelting, assuming it had a temper.

‘It won’t be easy.’

He was afraid when thinking about the pain he would have to endure. Grid needed to control his mind. After taking several deep breaths, Grid’s expression relaxed. Kraugel and Panmir had no choice but to misunderstand. They thought that Grid was nervous about a high-rated item not appearing. They never imagined that he was afraid of the act of making an item itself.

It was natural. So far, all the blacksmithing work they had seen, heard, and experienced was ordinary. Yes, most blacksmiths produced items by pressing a single ‘production’ button. Even Panmir, who was proud of making items by hand, relied on all types of systems. They couldn’t predict how much effort and time Grid placed into making items.

“Okay. Let’s start the production.”

He acted fast once the preparations were over. Grid put the White Tiger’s Breath into the furnace. The temperature in the furnace rapidly increased and the white bead heated up.

[The temperature is too high!]

“Kuk...!”

Panmir watched Grid and sighed. Grid aggressively utilized the characteristics of the white phosphorus wood and continued to raise the temperature of the furnace. Panmir was burned despite watching from a few meters away. Panmir clutched his burning forearm and belatedly realized. Apart from himself, the other blacksmiths were already far away from Grid’s furnace. It was the same even for White, the greatest of the four blacksmiths.

‘Even the craftsmen can’t endure the temperature?’

It was amazing that Grid instantly generated such a high temperature! As Panmir was feeling surprise beyond admiration.

*Puooook!*

*Chik! Chiiik!*

Grid removed the red bead and started quenching it. The bucket that was filled with at least 100 liters of water started boiling like lava. Kraugel, who had been watching from Grid’s side, avoided the water drops using Super Sensitivity. It was an almost instinctive motion.

“Ohh! Truly a Sword Saint...!”

The blacksmiths marvelled at Kraugel’s brilliant movements while Kraugel wondered.

‘Was making an item originally so urgent and dangerous?’

*Teong!*

Grid put the bead on his anvil. He still looked grim. He was like a warrior on the battlefield. Kraugel couldn’t help gulping at the momentum.

*Ttaaang!*

Grid finally started hammering. The moment that his hammer hit the White Tiger's Breath.

*Kwarururung!*

The White Tiger's Breath roared. Heavy shaking! Sharp thorns made of stones emerged like a hedgehog.

"Kuk...!"

Grid's cheeks, neck, and wrists were wounded. He couldn't completely evade the thorns that came from the White Tiger's Breath.

"Grid...!"

"Your Majesty!"

The confused Kraugel and blacksmiths shouted. But they weren't in a position to go forward. This was a battlefield only for Grid. There was no one who could help Grid without his permission. Grid wiped the blood flowing down his cheeks and laughed.

"This bastard, you are high-grade."

Its nature was fiercer than the Red Phoenix's Breath and Belial's Horn. Why was this white tiger so dirty?

'It's impossible to fight this guy twice in a row.'

Grid judged for a moment, temporarily stopped the hammering and pulled out his White Tiger's Breath. Then he threw it straight into the furnace.

'It is better to fight just once.'

That's right. Grid intended to simultaneously strengthen the two White Tiger's Breaths. The biggest problem was time. Grid had to go to the empire in two weeks. That was when the walls would collapse. He needed to finish producing the items by then.

"Kraugel, I need your help to smelt both of them at once."

"Say it."

"Give me potions."

"...?"

After a moment.

*Ttaaang!*

Grid placed the two White Tiger's Breaths next to each other and resumed hammering.

The White Tiger's Breaths let out a large number of thorns every time they were hit by a hammer. Grid was wounded, yet he kept wielding his hammer. When his wounds accumulated, Kraugel fed him potions to restore his health. Avoiding the thorns that stretched out everywhere!

*Ttang! Ttang!*

"Kraugel! Potion!"

"Drink. It's on the left. Avoid it."

"Keuk! I failed to avoid it again!"

"It's difficult to avoid attacks that have already started to fly. Watch the actions of the enemy and try to predict the direction of attack."

"Yes, I understand!"

*Ttang! Ttang! Ttaang~!*

"..."

Grid was fiercely concentrating during the hammering while Kraugel ran around and helped him. Panmir watched the amazing scene of the best players fighting together and felt something strange.

'Is this really making an item?'

It was steadily completed. The two divine swords!

# Chapter 792

*Ttang! Ttang! Ttang!*

*Hwaruruk!*

*Chiiik!*

The repetition of smelting and hammering. Grid kept doing this for a full day. But the two White Tiger's Breaths didn't yield. They resisted the flames and hammering to the end, becoming more ferocious. Every time they were hit by Grid's hammer, the thorns spread out faster than before.

*Ttaaang!*

[You have wounded the pride of the noble White Tiger!]

[The White Tiger is angry!]

[You have suffered 890 damage.]

[You have suffered 844 damage...]

...

...

'This guy is like a yangban compared to the Red Phoenix.'

It was like a hedgehog trying to protect itself. Whenever it was shocked, the White Tiger shot out dozens of thorns and Grid's face became covered in wounds. He was displeased with the phrase 'the pride of the noble White Tiger.' The White Tiger's Breaths attacked every time its pride was damaged, so it was easy to tell how arrogant the White Tiger was.

'One day in the East Continent.'

*Ttaang~! Ttang!*

'If I happen to meet with the sacred creatures.'

*Kwaruk! Kwaruruk.*

'It is better not to associate with the White Tiger. No, I shouldn't meet it at all.'

However, Grid had no time to think about it while hammering. He moved without hesitation to escape the thorns. Grid wasn't yet aware. The number of times Kraugel fed him potions was gradually diminishing.

'This was his intention.' Kraugel's eyes shone. 'Why did Grid face it directly without resorting to the God Hands... He's trying to understand the hidden intent and to analyze the patterns to develop his evasive power.'

Grid thought up to here when creating an item? Grid wanted to make up what he was lacking. Kraugel admired Grid's spirit.

"This type of effort made him what he is now."

Was Kraugel, who looked at Grid with warm eyes, misunderstanding? Wasn't the reason why Grid didn't bring out the God Hands was because he was so immersed in making an item that he didn't use his head? No. It was what he intended.

Grid took the resistance of the White Tiger's Breaths as a training opportunity. Practicing to avoid attacks when making items was better than easily defending with the God Hands. In other words, he focused on expanding his thinking and mastering control.

He calculated it from the beginning. Kraugel discovered this. However, Kraugel didn't notice one thing.

That's right.

[The experience of Tiramet's Belt (Unique) has increased by 0.01%!]

It was raising the experience of his items. The quality of the White Tiger's Breaths was

high and the power was low, so the experience of Tiramet's Belt was steadily rising. It barely rose by 0.01% every thousand hits, but wasn't it still good?

'If this was classified as a hit, the experience of Elfin Stone's Ring could rise as well. It's a shame.'

That's right. Grid was aiming at three things while making the item. Improving his control skills, his item experience, and his thinking ability.

*Ttang!*

*Ttang!*

Of course, he didn't intend to make the item roughly. The present Grid wasn't foolish enough to waste the White Tiger Breaths. The most important part for Grid was the production of items, so he did his best to strengthen the White Tiger's Breaths. He was in such a state of concentration that he could count exactly how many sparks flew every time he hammered.

But the result wasn't good.

*Kwaruruk.*

"Kuk...!"

Time passed. On the third day of the production, Grid was mentally tired. The momentum of the White Tiger's Breath wasn't lowered at all.

'No, how stubborn is it?'

It was too strong compared to other production materials in the same class. Despite the repeated smelting and hammering, the White Tiger's Breaths kept their original shape. Grid recalled the phrase 'pride of the noble White Tiger' and saw the White Tiger's nature as the reason for the lack of progress.

'No, wait.'

He realized it only on the third night.

'Isn't this a matter of attribute rather than personality?'

The White Tiger had the earth attribute. And earth was strong against fire. As soon as he was reminded of the basics, Grid noticed that this work was wrong from the beginning.

“The White Tiger’s Breath is the energy of the earth itself... It is a material that can’t be smelted with conventional methods.’

He had a headache. Kraugel, who had been guarding Grid for three days, saw that Grid stopped hammering and frowned as he noticed that something was wrong.

“What's going on?”

“I can’t smelt it.”

“...?”

Panmir was surprised from where he was sleeping on a mat to the side.

“What do you mean by you can’t smelt it?”

In the last three days, Panmir had been watching Grid’s every move. He didn’t want to miss anything about the legendary blacksmith’s work. He saw that there was nothing wrong with Grid’s actions. Grid’s workmanship was the best. Nevertheless, the White Tiger’s Breaths remained in their original form. Wasn’t it because it couldn’t be smelted?

“Then is it impossible to make the item?”

Panmir had no experience in dealing with myth rated materials and was confused. Unlike Kraugel, who was forced to stay silent because this wasn’t his world, Panmir thought about it.

“Is the temperature of the fire lacking? Isn’t the melting point very high because it is a material of the earth attribute?”

“No. The melting point has been reached.”

Minerals were classified as pure substances and mixed substances. As a simple example, iron was a pure substance while steel was a mixed substance. Once iron was heated up, the temperature would continue to rise to the melting point of 1,530

degrees, but the temperature was maintained until the iron was completely melted. On the other hand, steel was a mixed substance and the temperature wasn't maintained. Even after the temperature reached the melting point, it kept increasing by 100 degrees.

Grid was able to distinguish between a pure substance and mixed substance based on the temperature change.

"The White Tiger's Breath is a pure substance. There are no foreign materials added. The evidence is that the temperature hasn't risen since it reached 7,230 degrees."

Yes, the temperature wasn't lacking. The system recognized the melting point of the White Tiger's Breath as 7,230 degrees. In fact, just after the White Tiger's Breath was taken out of the furnace, it was reduced to a clay-like intensity.

"But in this state, the shape doesn't change despite the repeated quenching and hammering?"

"Yes. So I noticed a bit late. The material was so strong that I thought I needed to repeat the smelting and hammering many times to change shape gradually."

But not now.

"The smelting itself was wrong. I need to completely dissolve it to strengthen the White Tiger's Breath."

The fire was enough. Nevertheless, the fact that it wasn't melted meant he needed another way. Grid judged and asked Kraugel and Panmir, "What attributes is the earth attribute weak to?"

"It is naturally water and ice."

"If you go into the detailed classification, it is also vulnerable to plant-based skills."

"Soaking, transforming, freezing, cracking from the inside... is it?"

Grid guessed. In order to strengthen the White Tiger's Breaths, it was necessary to weaken the White Tiger's Breaths first. But a blacksmith was related to fire. Water, ice, and plants weren't Grid's areas.

'Then is it impossible for a blacksmith to strengthen the White Tiger's Breath?'

Strictly speaking, it was impossible for him to do it alone and needed the cooperation of others. Grid had no choice but to miss Braham.

'If there was Braham... '

*"Bah! It is a simple matter. With the magic in this body, I will drown the bead like a rat. Or what if I turn it into ice and smash it?"*

He would say something like this. There was the illusion of Braham's voice ringing in his ears.

"...Ah."

Grid smiled bitterly as he realized. His greatest strength was other people. He immediately sent a whisper to Lauel.

*-Is there a magician in our guild who specializes in water magic?*

*-I don't know why you're asking, but there's one person who can use powerful water attribute magic.*

Lauel's vision was high. He was in a position to seek able people, but he always placed Grid in the center. He wouldn't use the word 'powerful' for someone who wasn't. Grid's expectations were heightened.

*-Who is it?*

*-Euphemina.*

*-Ah!*

Duplicator Euphemina. Right. She could duplicate the best water attribute magic. Grid started to see the solution but it was only for a second.

'Is it that easy to duplicate the best magic?'

She had to find a caster and watch in real-time how the magic was used. He didn't know how many days it would take Euphemina to copy the best water magic. Grid

needed to strengthen the White Tiger's Breaths now.

Lael sent a whisper to the disappointed Grid.

*-Hasn't Euphemina learnt Mumud's magic? I heard that she has Mumud's water attribute magic.*

*-That's right! It was like this!*

Grid's face was filled with joy. Braham, who was one of the strongest among the legends. Mumud, one of the greatest talents who survived a one-on-one fight with the fire dragon Trauka. It was natural that Mumud's magic would be equal to Braham's magic.

The excited Grid immediately sent a whisper to Euphemina.

*-Euphemina! Can you come to the smithy right now?*

*-Of course. You're the one calling.*

She didn't even ask why. Euphemina was the representative of the Grid loyalists. Thanks to Mumud's magic, she was devoted to hunting without the limitations of the Duplicator class. Now she immediately returned to Reinhardt.

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"This is?"

A white bead. Unlike a pearl, it was just white. It was a deep color. But the surface was shiny and there was a mysterious spiritual energy.

"Yes, that's right. Hit it with the water attribute magic. Continue until just before it breaks."

"Yes, I'll try."

Euphemina nodded and gathered both hands together. It was only a moment.

'What?'

Both Grid and Kraugel were surprised at the same time. There was a blue intangible aura that occasionally occurred when magicians used magic. The so-called mana in the smithy started to gather at Euphemina's fingertips. It was different from ordinary usage. Normal magicians 'emitted' their mana while Euphemina seemed to 'absorb' the surrounding mana.

*Peeeeong!*

Euphemina shot the mana gathered at her fingertips. It became a stream of water that struck the White Tiger's Breaths. Then...

"Heok!"

Strong..."

Grid and Kraugel's faces turned white at the same time. It was because the White Tiger's Breaths, which had maintained its complete shape despite Grid hammering it for three days and nights, was dented with a single blow.

*Peng! Pepeng! Pepepeng!*

Euphemina kept shooting the magic. She hit the two White Tiger's Breaths until Grid told her to stop. The water she fired was as fierce as waves and his momentum was like an angry beast.

"The magic resembles the master..."'

Grid had been afraid of Euphemina in the past and trembled from the momentum.

"Stop! It's enough now!"

"Yes."

Euphemina stopped the magic and Grid immediately took the White Tiger's Breaths. The White Tiger's Breaths were cracked, like a glass bead on the verge of breaking.

'Good!'

Grid didn't delay. The white phosphorus wood was used as firewood and the white beads placed into the furnace that had been heated up to 7,230 degrees. Then...

*Tatak! Tak.*

In the flames, the cracks on the White Tiger's Breaths grew bigger. The smelting was finally over. It was the moment when Grid and Kraugel's knowledge, skills, and experiences were added to Euphemina's magic.

Grid sensed it. The strongest sword would be born.

# Chapter 793

'Does Grid have such a hard time every time he makes an item?'

A typical blacksmith produced items based on existing designs. They were able to complete the item by clicking on the Production Button with the necessary materials. But even such a simple production caused blacksmiths to feel weary, bored, and that it was difficult. It took several hours to produce according to the rating of the design. It was a hassle to sit down for a few hours in one place.

Yes, a few hours. Even the manual worker Panmir rarely took much longer to complete an item. It took a maximum of three days production time only when he made an ego item that could be produced every time certain conditions were met.

Yet Grid had already spent six days making an item. He even made the design himself. Mulling over it, discussing, responding to all sorts of variables, and repeating the same task for days and days. Putting aside the skills, this wasn't a process possible without his mental power.

Panmir was forced to pay tribute to Grid's efforts, persistence, and concentration.

'A legendary blacksmith... If I got that class, could I have developed like the current Grid?'

Panmir wondered. It wouldn't have been possible.

'I'm ashamed for once feeling jealous of Grid.'

It wasn't just Panmir. Many blacksmith users saw Grid badly. They misunderstood that he easily made items because he was a legendary blacksmith. But what if they discovered the secret behind Grid? They wouldn't dare to be jealous and envious of Grid. There was only one person.

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*Ttaaang!*

Thousands, tens of thousands of times of hammering.

[The White Tiger's Breath has been strengthened!]

A notification window popped up.

"Good!"

As fatigue pushed down his body and spirit, Grid cheered while hammering. The White Tiger's Breaths on the anvil had completely transformed into transparent beads.

[Strengthened White Tiger's Breath]

It was the White Tiger's Breath that hardened after all types of impacts.

Increases earth resistance by 40% even when carrying it in the inventory.

It can be used to infuse items with the powerful aura of the white tiger.

However, it can only be attached to items with a strong earth attribute.

Weight: 2

"It's finally finished!"

Panmir heard Grid's cry and rose from his seat. Kraugel's face was shining. He had been protecting Grid for the last week and felt relieved that the hard fight was over.

Grid grinned. "Now that the necessary material is complete, I can make the sword."

"..."

Ah, wasn't it originally making a sword? He had watched Grid hammering the bead for a week and forgot what item was supposed to be made.

Kraugel, Euphemina, and Panmir all couldn't help shrugging. They were worried about how hard Grid would have to work from now on.

"I'm sorry." Eventually, Kraugel bowed his head.

Grid was embarrassed by Kraugel's apology. "Why are you apologizing suddenly?"

"I never dreamt you would suffer like this every time you make an item. I asked you to do this and placed a huge burden on you."

"No."

He didn't suffer every time he made an item. Grid tried to explain but Euphemina spoke before he could.

"In the past, you suffered during the few days you made my orb. Grid, you truly are amazing. Having the noble spirit of sacrifice to produce the best items, all the people in this world should emulate it."

"No..."

This time and that time were special cases, it didn't always happen. Grid tried to explain again but this time Panmir interrupted.

"At this point, you should be on the National Geographic. A documentary should be made in order to inform everyone that Grid devotes a much greater effort and sincerity than the blacksmiths of the real world."

"That's right! Everyone should know that Grid is the best worker in the world!"

"Grid, there will be more than one or two people who will respect you."

"..."

The world's best worker worthy of respect... The best figures in each field couldn't help praising Grid's great spirit of labor. But Grid didn't feel proud. He was actually sad.

‘Is it just me living this hard?’

How many people suffered in the game so far? Originally, games were a means of satisfying pleasure. Grid was really a special case. Grid sighed and pulled out the design of Muksabal.

“I’m starting.”

Now that the necessary materials were complete, the remaining work could proceed.

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“Gulp...”

Kraugel, Euphemina, and Panmir gulped as they stood next to each other. They were amazed by Grid’s delicate and brilliant work while maintaining his peak concentration.

*Ttang! Ttang! Ttang!*

Once the bloodstone, the best mineral of hell, was hammered, it became a transparent red. It was as beautiful as glass. But the hardness couldn’t compare to any metal in the world.

*Hwaruruk!*

The shape of the blade gradually emerged from the fire.

*Chiik!*

It was immersed in water and cooled down.

*Ttang! Ttang!*

Grid repeated the hammering dozens of times.

“Ohhh!”

“Whoa...”

The blacksmiths who rushed once they heard Grid's work was ending let out cries of admiration. A transparent red sword with a crown-shaped knuckle bow. It wasn't gorgeous, but was full of elegance. It was comparable to a sword that had been passed down through the royal family from generation to generation.

'There are no faults.'

Grid's heart started pounding. The thickness and width of the blade were designed with the combined knowledge of Grid and Kraugel, making the shape perfect. The instincts of the Sword Saint were attracted to the sword.

[You are witnessing a famous sword of the era!]

[You will gain an additional bonus if you acquire the sword!]

*Duguen.*

He was reminded of the notification window that popped up when he encountered Grid's Enlightenment Sword in the 3rd National Competition. Kraugel realized. It was the luck of a lifetime that he built up a relationship with Grid. Thus, he was able to decide.

'Grid, I will repay you.'

He would return it a few times. Was his true mind passed on?

'It will definitely be excellent.'

Grid's faith in the outcome became stronger.

"With this, it's finished!"

It was a lot of hard work. The excited Grid shouted as loud as he could as he attached the strengthened White Tiger's Breath. It was the last stage of the work.

At that moment.

*Flash!*

A brilliant yet warm white light enveloped the smithy. The effect was so intense that people couldn't see.

"Ahhhhh!"

Grid's cheer echoed. Two completed swords were placed on the anvil in front of him. The red transparent blade was now completely white and transparent.

[World Crushing Sword of the Noble White Tiger]

Rating: Myth

Durability: 2,170/2,170 Attack Power: 3,150 Defense: 724

\* 20% increase in physical attack power.

\* 10% increase in defense.

\* 10% increase in magic resistance.

\* 20% increase in maximum health.

\* 30% bonus earth attribute damage.

\* 15% bonus dark attribute damage.

\* 20% additional damage to sacred beings.

\* There is a chance of the sword's weight increasing when attacking. At this time, the physical attack power that ignores the target's defense will increase by 113%. However, the speed of recovering the sword is increased by one second.

\* When attacked, there is a normal chance of 'Pillar' being released. The giant stone pillar has a blasting effect of up to 5 meters. The damage applied is 50% of the weapon's attack power.

\* There is a normal chance of blocking attacks. If you succeed in blocking an attack, 'Thorns' will be released. Sharp stone thorns will cause damage to all targets in range and will cause a 'reduced recovery' effect. The amount of damage applied is 30% of

the weapon's attack power.

★ When attacking, there is a low probability of causing the target to be 'partially petrified.' Ignores petrification resistance. A small amount of health will be restored when attacking a petrified target.

\* The skill 'White Tiger's Attitude' is generated.

\* The skill 'White Tiger's Cry' is generated.

A sword that will become a myth beyond legends. The owner of this sword will leave countless achievements and will be the protagonists of hymns that future generations will sing.

The skill Seeing the Gods' Techniques of blacksmith Grid, the magic of Mumud, and the knowledge of a Sword Saint are gathered. The hidden function of 'petrification' and 'recovery' have been implemented because the features of the White Tiger's Breath have been drawn out to the extremes.

It will be the symbol of fear to the enemy and a symbol of protection to the master.

Conditions of Use: The top three rankers in each class capable of using a sword type weapon.

Weight: 6,800

[White Tiger's Attitude Lv. 1]

Acquires the attitude of the White Tiger.

Attack power and movement is reduced by 80% and defense is increased by 198%.

Skill Mana Cost: 17 per second.

Cooldown Time: 30 minutes.

[White Tiger's Cry Lv. 1]

Creates an earthquake with a radius of 5 meters.

All objects within range are subjected to a 'loss of balance' status and a 13% reduction in defense, evasion, and accuracy. If the target is using a spell or skill, casting is forcibly cancelled.

Mana Consumption: 1,500

Cooldown Time: 10 minutes.

'The best!'

The attack power was less than the Enlightenment Sword. It was evident that the Enlightenment Sword was much better than the White Tiger Sword when the effects of black flames and red lightning occurred. But in terms of sustainability and balance, the White Tiger Sword was definitely superior. It had much better utilization. In particular, Grid paid attention to White Tiger's Attitude.

'An 80% reduction in attack power.'

Grid's attack power was so high that he could easily incapacitate the opponent. On the other hand, who could defeat the Grid who had nearly three times the defense?

'Wouldn't they have to be a duke level to catch me?'

That's right. White Tiger's Attitude favored people with excellent stats. The skill was more fraudulent when applied to people like Grid.

[A total of three myth rated items have been produced so something special will happen!]

Grid smiled at the rising notification window and handed Kraugel a normal rated growth type White Tiger Sword.

# Chapter 794

[Still Crouching White Tiger Sword]

[Rating: Normal (Growth)]

Durability: 390/390

Attack Power: 373

Defense: 31

\* 10% drop in attack speed.

\* 3% increase in physical attack power.

\* 3% increase in defense.

\* 3% increase in magic resistance.

\* 6% increase in maximum health.

\* 8% bonus earth attribute damage.

\* There is a low chance of the sword's weight increasing when attacking. At this time, the physical attack power that ignores the target's defense will increase by 33%. However, the speed of recovering the sword is increased by one second.]

A sword that will become a myth beyond legends...

Omitted.

It was one of the two swords made by Grid. Fortunately, Yura had been able to steadily attain the bloodstones while hunting in hell. This was a sword made by borrowing the legendary rated material stored in the guild's warehouse. It was also boosted by the power of the strengthened White Tiger's Breath, meaning it couldn't be regarded as a

normal rated item. Considering that the basic performance of growth type items was superior to that of general items, this was unreasonable.

Of course, it was insignificant compared to Grid's myth rated sword.

"..." Kraugel's mouth was firmly closed after confirming the item information. Was it an expression of disappointment? No. That wasn't the reason why he didn't open his mouth.

Grid knew the reason. "Are you touched? You have forgotten your words."

If a person who didn't know the value of a growth item witnessed the present scene, they would've doubted Grid's personality. There might be people who insulted Grid for only taking the good items. However, Kraugel knew the value of the growth type items.

Every time a growth type item raised its rating, its stats would increase significantly and new options would be added. The contents of the options were determined according to the characteristics of the user, so it was very good for the user. In other words, the lower the rating, the higher the potential of the growth items—from normal to rare, rare to epic, epic to unique, unique to legend, and legend to myth.

Every time the White Tiger Sword increased its rating, it would become dramatically stronger and eventually surpass Grid's myth rated White Tiger Sword.

"Really... Can I really take this sword?" The silent Kraugel finally opened his mouth.

Grid smiled at his quivering voice. "Of course. I made the sword for you in the first place."

"But Grid, this is a growth type item. You deserve to have it."

The other White Tiger Sword... Grid wanted to use the myth rated White Tiger Sword, but the growth type White Tiger Sword would be better for him in the long run. Kraugel sincerely thought like this. Grid shook his head at Kraugel's concern. "As you know, I've been swapping between multiple weapons. How can I raise the sword to a myth rating over time?"

Tiramet's Belt, Elfin Stone's Ring, and the God Hands had been stuck at the unique rating for years. It would take at least 10 years of Satisfy time to grow the normal rated

White Tiger Sword to myth rated. However, that was just from his perspective. Unlike Grid who had many items, Kraugel could focus on only raising the White Tiger Sword. There was also the possibility of accelerating the growth rate of the sword with the class bonus of a Sword Saint.

"This is right. I think it is a reasonable distribution," Grid asserted.

"I promise," Kraugel pledged, "I will return it to you as soon as I raise this sword to the myth rating. I will exchange it with your current sword."

"...What?"

This was absurd. Grid's heart thumped. He could feel Kraugel's sincerity.

'Really.'

There were many good people around him. He didn't know where this good luck came from. The red-eyed Grid was so embarrassed that he became angry. "Don't be ridiculous. Won't it grow into the most appropriate sword for you? Just be thankful."

"...You won't regret it?"

"Are you going to make me regret it?"

"No, I will pay you back."

"That's it. It is more than enough." Grid knew Kraugel's value. The future sword god? If he could get the heart and trust of his friend, then it was worth more than 10 swords. "I hope this sword will be a token of our eternal friendship."

"Eternal..." A smile spread across Kraugel's face as he thought of this word. The number of times he had felt this happy could be counted on one hand. It was the same with Grid. The people who had been alone because they were too lacking or too good were now facing each other on the same level with the same feelings.

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'Let's try it once.'

Grid was obligated to use the Pulling Device. It wasn't possible to neglect the item

which had been created to minimize item swapping speed. In the future, he planned to make weapons in the form of a 'blade' like the Enlightenment Sword.

The reason he had made the White Tiger Sword in its full form was due to Kraugel's expectations. He had listened to Sword Saint Kraugel's advice and created a sword with unrivaled abilities.

The result was commendable. The aggressiveness was less than that of the Enlightenment Sword, but the overall harmony was overwhelming. Grid especially liked the great defense. The basic defense alone was at 724. This was at the level of wearing a good armor. It was close to the basic defense of the Holy Light Armor, which Grid had used along with Triple Layers for nearly nine years of game time.

'The source of this defense is the knuckle bow'

Grid looked at the knuckle bow that was at the end of the transparent blade. The crown-shaped knuckle bow decorated with red velvet blended elegantly with the transparent blade.

'I had no choice but to make it with a handle. In order to connect the White Tiger Sword to the Pulling Device, I must eventually remove the handle, losing the best defense.'

However, the White Tiger Sword's attack power would increase greatly instead. Attaching it to the handle of Sword Ghost with the Pulling Device would transform the blade into an aggressive one.

'It is the most ideal plan.'

The knuckle bow would be modified to be integral with the blade, not the handle. Even if it was connected to the Pulling Device, it could increase attack power while maintaining defense.

'But I can't afford it with my current skill'

Once the knuckle bow was integrated with the blade, the balance of the blade would break. The White Tiger Sword wouldn't be the White Tiger Sword anymore, and it could even lose its myth status.

'I think it will be possible if my blacksmithing level increases by two more...'

It meant he had to wait a few years. At present, he had no solution for this. Grid thought for a long time before shaking his head. It wasn't meaningful to think in a state where his head was completely stiff.

'I'm at my limit.'

He had been focused on making an item for 10 days. It was natural to be exhausted. Grid needed time to recover. He would leave Kraugel's commission for armor and boots for later.

"Dear husband!"

It was his family. Irene was now the national mother and a role model for hundreds of thousands of people. There were countless people who were encouraged by her kindness and tried to imitate her. However, even such a great woman was still a girl in front of Grid. The girl who faced her first love—she dreamed of being loved.

"I heard you suffered a lot," Irene spoke in an emotional voice while hugging him firmly. She understood Grid's pain, from after Khan died, better than anyone else and was worried he would do something.

Grid stroked her soft cheek and smiled brightly.

"I'm not overdoing it. I always consider my health and safety first. Don't worry about my physical fitness," he said to fill Irene's heart with relief.

However, even someone pure like Irene could notice Grid's lie. Grid was someone who had built a family, fought alongside his colleagues, and built a kingdom and defended it. Irene was well aware that Grid always pushed himself too hard.

"I don't think so. Rest as much as you can today." Irene placed her hands on his waist and raised her gaze. However, her big and round eyes couldn't look angry. She looked like a rabbit instead. Grid had to hide his smile because she looked so cute.

"I won't yield. Please enter the bedroom and rest."

"Okay. Let's have a good sleep today."

Grid needed a break anyway. His stamina was depleted from the tiring item production, and his tense spirit needed stability. Yes, he really meant to take a break.

However, he couldn't rest effortlessly when moving to the bedroom.

It was because Irene started massaging his legs to help him recover from the fatigue. The game underwear that Grid had saved... No, she was wearing the vampire underwear. He wasn't able to relax because she was wearing underwear which revealed her body while she continued rubbing his body. Every time he felt her soft touch, his body shuddered. Every time her mouth touched his skin, the detailed explanation will be omitted. In the end...

"Irene! I can't do it!"

"What do you need?"

"Irene!!"

The detailed description of Grid touching Irene's ripe flesh will be omitted.

"Irene! I love you!!"

"Ahh! Dear husband~!"

As the air in the bedroom became hotter, the two of them became entangled on the bed. Further descriptions are omitted.

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"Will I get a younger sibling?" Lord laughed as he stood in front of Grid's bedroom. It was the pure pleasure from knowing that his parent's love was still alive.

*Hum hum*, a middle-aged man cleared his throat. It was Chucksley, a knight guarding the Overgeared royal family. "Prince, this is disrespectful."

"Oh, I didn't notice. *Hehet!* I'll come back later."

The calm Chucksley trusted Lord. Now the child, who had become a big boy, obediently stepped back and into the arms of beautiful girls. The women who were Rebecca's Daughters' candidates would become mature women in a year or two. It was an Overgeared army that most people didn't even know about.

"Prince Lord, do you feel good?"

“No. I want a kiss.”

“Then I am first! *Chu!*”

“Ah! No! The prince’s right cheek is mine!”

...If other people saw it, they would think it was a scene of lonely girls chasing after a prince.

A few days later...

“I will be going.”

“You aren’t missing anything?”

“Yes. I stopped by the alchemy facility and got everything I needed.”

“Okay. I already mentioned it a few times but if you are in danger, use Knights Summoning. The Overgeared members will be standing by. Understood?”

“Yes.” Grid received Lauel’s goodbye and secretly left Reinhardt. His destination was naturally in Titan. It was the imperial palace.

# Chapter 795

It had been confirmed that Mercedes disobeyed an order and went to Valhalla. Breaking an order was proof that she had lost faith in the emperor, while visiting a hostile kingdom without permission was evidence of rebellion. The contents of Gyuratan's report contained clear slander and distortion of facts. The behavior of the First Knight was a cause for emergency because she had gone to visit the enemy.

'There is a reason why Mercedes visited Valhalla.'

She had tried to get revenge by finding the Undefeated King's descendant. In fact, there was no way she would join with Valhalla. Emperor Juander was convinced of this. However...

'It is also true that she broke my orders.'

Sadly, the emperor had no choice but to doubt Mercedes' loyalty. If she were truly loyal to him, she wouldn't have left his sight for any reason.

'Well, I never expected loyalty in the first place.'

It was natural. Even the trusted Piaro had betrayed him and the empire. The so-called knights were no different from clowns. Loyalty was merely a mask that could be thrown away at any time.

'But it would be nice if I could trust Gyuratan a bit more.'

The Fourth Knight Gyuratan was the decisive figure who revealed Piaro's betrayal 12 years ago. What was his reason for monitoring the Red Knights and turning Mercedes into a villain by distorting the truth?

'There might be something dangerous. I have to watch out for Mercedes.'

Emperor Juander made a decision.

"The First Knight should be loyal to the royal family, but Mercedes abandoned her duty by breaking my orders. I will deprive Mercedes of all her qualifications, and she will

be disciplined for three years."

It was like a bolt out of the blue. The big and small officials were upset.

Who was Mercedes? She was the person who united the Red Knights which had been fractured due to Piaro's betrayal. Thanks to her work, the Red Knights could be maintained and stability restored. She showed bravery in wars and activities which were difficult to emulate. Mercedes was the symbol of a new era. Yet the emperor was throwing away this symbol? The wave of shock created at this time was terrible.

Even the emperor's aide thought negatively about it.

"She is under the empress' command. No, I don't think you should do this, even if she is a puppet of the empress."

"That's right. Disqualifying her is on a different dimension from simply disciplining her."

"You have to think about her influence. There is a fear that the knights will go against Your Majesty. I think it is right to give proper disciplinary actions."

Would the Red Knights follow Duke Limit or First Knight Mercedes? Most of the knights were likely to choose Mercedes. Mercedes was a respected knight, so the emperor's decision was puzzling.

"Hrmm..." With even his closest people reacting like this, the calm emperor became frustrated. He tapped the table with his thick fingers. Then suddenly...

*Kwaduduk!*

Strange noises came down from the ceiling.

"...!"

In the emperor's office, Emperor Juander and the dukes sitting around the table looked up.

"Wait a moment." Guard captain Bain, who was always protecting the emperor's side, jumped up. The falling metal chandelier was caught in Bain's big hand.

“W-What is this...?”

The faces of the dukes turned white. The chandelier hanging on the ceiling had suddenly fallen?

‘What an ominous sign!’

This was the emperor’s office. It was impossible for the facilities to not be maintained properly. Indeed, there were no signs of old age on the chandelier. In fact, it seemed new. The dukes read this as the sign of a disaster and were anxious. However, the emperor was furious. “Empress...!”

The blood vessels on his face bulged as he realized something. The empress wasn’t a puppet of the nobles but their leader. The emperor confirmed that this chandelier was a gift from the empress one month ago and shouted furiously, “Drag Marie before me right now!”

“Understood!”

It was an unusually serious situation. The dukes, who had been sitting heavily on the ground, rushed out of the room. There were already hundreds of guards in front of the office. Emergency commands were ringing out all over the imperial palace.

“Block all the doors right now! Don’t let a single mouse leave the palace!”

“Yes!”

“Go and collect Empress Marie! This is a royal order!”

“Yes!”

A flood of chaos poured out. The political situation of the empire was changing rapidly. At this time...

“I-It is urgent!!” Shocking news was delivered to the emperor. “A corner of the southern wall has collapsed!”

“What?”

The strong walls of Titan, which hadn’t allowed a single enemy since its founding, had

collapsed? To think that all of this was happening so suddenly? It was an unprecedented event and emotional instability started to bubble deep in the heart of the emperor.



"Your Majesty doesn't have any part that isn't beautiful." In the empress' palace, the noblewoman bowing whilst on her knees kept on saying flattering words. She was carefully painting the empress' nails. A noble lady from a good family was on her knees and doing someone else's nails... It made the maids, who were at one side, restless. They knew that they would eventually receive a punishment for witnessing a noble like this.

"I'm worried this powdered pearl might not be beautiful enough for your feet."

"Don't be disruptive. It isn't bad," Empress Marie responded with a benign smile. She felt a bliss that couldn't be spoken. A noble lady was like a puppy before her... The feeling of this power was great.

'She is doing my toenails.'

This was the power of the empress. She couldn't imagine what the power of the empress dowager would be like. Marie's desires were overwhelming. Her goal of putting the 4th Prince on the throne became even more set.

*"Huung. Huuung,"* the empress's humming flowed out from her mouth. It was a beautiful song like an angel was singing. However, the noblewoman and the maids knew. They couldn't be deceived by the empress' kind smile and beautiful appearance. She was far from an angel.

"Your Majesty!"

"...*Huung.*"

The tranquility was broken. The empress stopped humming and moved her gaze. Viscount Albert had urgently rushed over, panting harshly. "It is better to avoid His Majesty."

"What?" The empress was angry rather than confused. She was the empire's empress

and would later be the mother of the emperor. Yet she now had to avoid the emperor? Her? Why?

Viscount Albert explained to the frowning empress, "Duke Grenhal is headed for this palace, but his mood is bad! He has His Majesty's guards with him!"

"Duke Grenhal...?"

Why was the right arm of the emperor coming here? The emperor's guards were also coming?

"Find out what is going on," the empress said, realizing that the mood was unusual. Then she immediately rose from her seat, and the maids carefully put on her shoes. Before leaving the room, the empress pointed to the maids. "Get rid of them. We must defend the honor of our countess."

"E-Empress...!" The maids cried out.

"I am always thrilled with Your Majesty's consideration." The noblewoman bowed with thanks. The empress' palace, which was filled with lowly women, was also disgusting today. Viscount Albert bit his lips so that the empress wouldn't notice his thoughts. Then he picked up his sword and cut down the five maids.

One knight ran and reported to the empress, "I heard that the mobile hanging in your bedroom fell down." (Mobile: a decorative structure that is suspended so as to turn freely in the air.)

The empress' face stiffened. "What is the cause?"

"I'm not sure. The maids said that the mobile became bigger and heavier than before."

"....." She couldn't believe her ears. Empress Marie immediately grasped the situation. "Right now... Prepare the carriage right now. I must meet His Majesty."

She had to explain it at once. Then the empress heard a voice, "I have already prepared the carriage. Now, let's go, Your Majesty."

It was Duke Grenhal. As usual, he was riding on top of a rhino. The empress didn't like his gaze. However, she couldn't express this. Duke Grenhal, who boasted the strongest power among the seven dukes, wasn't someone the empress could deal with.

“Thank you for your consideration.”

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“This is serious.”

Regardless of the awfulness, the empress' palace was peaceful on the surface.

At one point in the afternoon, this was overturned. Veradin identified the cause and decided that the empress' position would be greatly reduced from today onward.

‘If we don't move, we might be caught in the flames.’

Immortal belonged to the Rose Knights under Empress Marie's command. They had to be careful of the guilt by association.

‘A new nesting site is necessary.’

Veradin hastened to take steps. Immortal and Agnus had stayed at the empress' palace for a while.

‘Let's leave this palace.’

In the worst case, the backing of the empress could be poison. Then it would be hard to go anywhere on the West Continent.

‘It would be nice to move to the East Continent.’

A crisis was an opportunity. It might be forced but this was good timing to try new challenges. Veradin thought so and felt a clear sense of hope. He thought it was simply Marie's crisis and forgot how dangerous the situation was. Why?

...Because at least the palace was still the safest place. Leaving it would be a big mistake. His enemies were greater in number than he had imagined. For the sake of revenge, the enemy had sunk the biggest nation on the continent into chaos.

*Step, step.*

“.....”

One step, a second step, a third step...

Veradin's steps became faster as he left the palace. He felt a sense of discomfort. Due to the absence of the empress, the knights and soldiers who used to be on guard everywhere couldn't be seen. Then he realized... this was no longer a safe place. However, enlightenment always arrived too late.

"Do you feel the need to go to the toilet? Why are you in a hurry?"

"....."

When they arrived in front of the palace, Veradin heard a familiar voice behind him. Veradin stopped walking. "Is it because of Lauel? The current situation is Lauel's work?"

"You aren't qualified to ask me."

"Are you a fool? This is Immortal's base. What do you plan to do after successfully infiltrating it? You alone can't threaten us."

"You aren't a threat. I will kill you. All of you."

"*Hah*, do you plan to use Knights Summoning? If the Overgeared members' faces are seen in this uproar, the sword of the empire will point at the Overgeared Kingdom."

"You know what? You are the first one."

Veradin was still turned away from Grid. Then he looked toward the entrance of the empress' palace and screamed as loudly as possible, "Get out here!"

"What? Eh! G-Grid!"

"What? Really? It is Grid!!"

"Everyone get out of here!"

Dozens or hundreds of necromancers poured out. It was only after seeing them that Veradin felt relief. Then he faced it—Grid's cool gaze.

"This is the first time."

“What do you mean?”

“The first time that you will die for me.”

“...?”

“I won’t count Piaro’s kill, you bastard.”

Khan’s enemy was finally right here. The Grid at this moment wasn’t the person admired by two billion people or the Overgeared King representing his people. It was the complete Grid. He wanted to vent his uncontrollable resentment and killing desire.

*Paaaat!*

The necromancers summoned their skeletons. However, the moment that Veradin’s death knight and some of the necromancers’ skeletons tried to intercept Grid...

“Remember. You are already dead if I appear before you.” Grid moved to Veradin’s side using Freely Move and wielded the Enlightenment Sword while being buffed with Blacksmith’s Rage and Blackening.

*Sakak-!*

“*Ugh...!*”

[You have suffered 51,900 damage.]

[35% of your maximum health is preserved due to the effect of Overcoming Death.]

Did Veradin get hit by a skill? His spirit was stunned by the very powerful blow. Veradin shrank back and pulled out a potion.

*Puooook!*

Then Lifael’s Spear pierced him. Death Knight Kyleo and the other skeleton knights started hitting Grid. However, rather than blocking the attacks, Grid just released a poisonous fog. Veradin was in pain from being stabbed by a sword and spear, not because he was poisoned.

"Die. A hundred times, a thousand times more." Grid smiled evilly as he dealt the finishing blow, reminiscent of the days when he was called a butcher.

It was only two normal attacks...

*Kuwaaaaaang!*

Then the black flames exploded. Veradin and the surrounding necromancers turned to gray.

# Chapter 796

“This is nonsense!”

It was an obvious story, but Immortal had also watched the videos of the National Competition several times. From the opening ceremony to the closing ceremonies, there were enthusiasts who watched the rerun without missing a single game. They knew the existence of the instant skill Grid had used to take out Tarma.

However, they hadn't expected for the power of that skill to ruin Veradin. Why? Veradin was a person who had transcended the limits of a necromancer in the area of survival. Just look at back when the Overgeared Kingdom was invaded. At the time, Veradin had overpowered Faker. Veradin had even endured an assassin's onslaught, so it was hard to think he would die with just one blow. Furthermore...

‘It was a wide-range skill?’

The moment the black flames exploded, dozens of necromancers within 10 meters of Veradin died as well. The Immortal members thought it was absurd. How could an instant skill boast such great power and an enormous range of influence?

‘Is a legendary skill this different?’

The sound of nervous gulps could be heard everywhere. The one who broke the uneasy silence was the 2nd ranked necromancer, Bullet. “Scat... Scatter! Scatter everywhere!”

Then the 7th ranked Drew shouted, “Don’t let that monster get away!”

“*Hiik!*”

A human’s desire to survive overcame fear. The necromancers overwhelmed by Grid’s firepower quickly recovered their minds. They summoned advanced undead such as skeleton knights and mages to keep Grid in check while they maximized the distance. However, there were some people who ran away without looking back.

They were Grid’s first targets.

“Where are you trying to run away to?”

There was no salvation, only pest control. Grid needed to eradicate them completely. He knew this because he had met many types of people.

“Transcend.”

*Kuooooh!*

As Grid started a sword dance in the middle of the retreating necromancers, his neat black hair started to rise. The fragments of the ground, which couldn't endure the black flames explosion, rose into the air. It was the forerunner to Grid changing to ranged attacks.

*Peng!*

*Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!*

In his blackened state, Grid reached his maximum speed. He was able to swing his sword six times per second, which meant he could fire six energy swords per second. Grid was a weapon rather than a human.

“*Kuaaaack!*”

“*Ugh! Kuk...!*”

The necromancers, who had wanted to survive alone by escaping, fell as their backs were hit by the energy swords Grid fired. As ordinary necromancers, they had low defense and health. Therefore, most of them died after receiving a single blow from Grid. The people who had the fortune to survive were in a stunned state. It couldn't be helped since they had lost more than half their health with one blow.

“Lubaan!” Bullet’s cry that was close to a scream echoed on the battlefield. Death Knight Lubaan responded to his will and struck toward Grid.

*Kwaaaaah!*

Lubaan was an orc fighter when still alive, and he used a halberd that was over two meters long as a weapon. While sniping at the fleeing necromancers, a gap in Grid’s defense was exposed, causing him to fall from Lubaan’s powerful slice.

'Very good.' Bullet's expectations of Lubaan rose sharply. Lubaan's attack power was the best. His attack power was even beyond that of Death Knight Kyleo, and Bullet thought that Grid wouldn't be able to avoid a critical hit. However...

*Chaaeng!*

The notification windows which rose as soon as Lubaan's halberd struck Grid's shoulder caused Bullet's face to harden.

[You have dealt 2,430 damage to the target!]

[Poisonous fog has popped up!]

[Death Knight Lubaan is now poisoned.]

"...Isn't this crazy?"

It was an armor which caused poison damage instead of having overwhelming defense?

'What is this?'

Bullet had already witnessed Grid exert a powerful attack against a dragon. However, like Kraugel, hadn't Grid died easily from the dragon's breath? Additionally, he had become ragged in his PvP match against Kraugel. Yes, Grid's items were excellent, but his defense seemed rather normal.

Bullet was the second strongest out of tens of thousands of necromancers. Like the National Competition rankers such as Kraugel, Bullet believed that he could threaten Grid. However, it was a terrible arrogance. No, it was a shameful mistake.

'I am a frog in a well.'

They were in entirely different classes. When Bullet realized the reality of the situation, he was stunned for a moment.

[Death Knight Lubaan has returned to the ground.]

Seeing that his death knight was unable to withstand Grid's onslaught and had died, Bullet shouted, "Corpse Explosion! There is no other answer!"

The necromancers, who were helpless while Grid wielded his sword without a break, instantly found hope. Corpse Explosion—it was a magic which inflicted damage proportional to the target's maximum health by self-exploding the summoned undead. A big disadvantage of this magic was that it took a considerably long amount of time to re-summon the destroyed undead. However, its power was outstanding.

The necromancers realized that a long battle with Grid was disadvantageous and started to used Corpse Explosion.

*Kuwaaaaang!*

[You have suffered 4,900 damage.]

The moment that the undead approaching Grid exploded...

The necromancers cheered, "Good!"

This was because they saw Grid coughing up blood for the first time. Hundreds of undead that were now walking bombs approached Grid. This scene was no different from a horror movie.

"Grid! Pay the price for your arrogance!"

There was a limit to the power of an individual. Immortal looked down at Grid's foolishness for facing them alone. Dozens of ghouls closed the distance to Grid, and they exploded simultaneously.

*Kwang!*

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

There was a powerful explosion! The explosion centered on Grid shook the empress' palace. However...

*"Uh...?"*

Grid was fine. It was because he absorbed the explosion with Kruger's Mysterious Cloth. He emerged unscathed from the dust.

*Puok!*

*"Cough!"*

*Kwajak!*

*"Kyaak!"*

Grid in his Blackened State chased the necromancers with an agility that they couldn't afford. The necromancers continued to die as he flashed about like Hong Gildong across the battlefield.

"W-What...? How can you be fine? *Heok!*" Drew shrieked as he summoned new undead to stop Grid. Then he saw two delicate skeletons. The undead he thought had been summoned by allies came up and stabbed him. These skeletons were different from normal skeletons. They had 'expressions.'

Bullet was confused when he saw the skeletons' '△ △' eyes which seemed to laugh at him.

*"W-What are these crazy skeletons?"*

The unidentified skeletons were weak. Bullet only suffered 100 damage from their stabs. However, he felt a strangely ominous feeling. Undead with facial expressions? He had never heard of it before. Even the best undead, the lich didn't have expressions.

'Maybe these are... '

Super rare undead?

'Who is the summoner? *Heok!!*'

Bullet's gaze shifted to above the skeletons' heads. The names of the skeletons were Overgeared Skeleton One and Overgeared Skeleton Two. The naming sense clearly showed who their master was.

“G-Grid is the summoner?”

A blacksmith with undead? No, how could this be? The moment Bullet had this question...

*Puok!*

“Keok...!”

He coughed up blood. While Bullet had been busy looking at the Overgeared Skeletons, Grid had come up behind him and stabbed his heart.

“W-Wait a minute...”

He was stabbed once and only had 10% health left. Stunned, Bullet barely managed to open his mouth, “S-Spare me... Please spare me...! I never invaded the Overgeared Kingdom! It was all Veradin’s group! I’m a victim!”

Bullet was well aware that the human mind was surprisingly weak. He believed that if he told Grid the truth like this, he would hesitate. However, Grid’s reaction was different from what Bullet had expected.

“You should’ve stopped it.”

It was a dull reaction. Grid subsequently struck forth, and Bullet turned to gray. His terrible appearance made the few remaining necromancers despair. It was at this moment that they realized when to use the expression, ‘intimidated enough to piss slightly.’ This would continue until they left Immortal. No, maybe they couldn’t get rid of Grid’s revenge until they quit the game.

Grid scared all of them and immediately wore the Hooded Zip Up. Soldiers were rushing over after hearing the damn Corpse Explosions, so he couldn’t delay.

‘It is unfortunate that I missed Agnus.’

However, it would be terrible if his identity were to be discovered here. The angry empire would attack the Overgeared Kingdom if they discovered the truth.

‘I have to escape.’

Grid planned to leave via the north gate. The vigilance there should be relatively weak since it was located opposite the collapsed southern wall.

◊ ◊ ◊

In the north of Titan, there was a dwelling area filled with mansions and villas for the empire's nobles.

First Knight Mercedes' mansion was also located there.

"Who would dare go against the empire...?"

Mercedes was informed of the southern wall collapsing and immediately equipped her sword. She was about to wear the Red Armor, only to hesitate and leave her home in a one-piece outfit. Then she encountered a group of Red Knights. Mercedes looked confused. The knights gathered in the garden were Fourth Knight Gyuratan and his followers.

Gyuratan shrugged. "Breaking another imperial order... I guess the rumor must be true."

"What are you talking about?"

"Rumor has it that you have lost respect for the emperor and that you are trying to rebel."

"What is this unfounded accusation?"

"Anyone would think like me unless they are a fool. The wall collapsed as soon as there were rumors that His Majesty was going to deprive you of your qualifications. Isn't it something that the forces behind you committed?"

"No one is going to believe this."

"No, everyone will be led to believe it. Didn't you create this chaos to leave your mansion? I don't know what type of terrible punishment you will receive."

"...This conversation is meaningless," Mercedes said. Then she noticed something.

"You are planning to frame me, just as you did to Piaro 12 years ago."

"Speaking the name of a traitor. It is clear evidence of your betrayal." The corners of Gyuratan's mouth curved upward. His mouth was too big, so his smile was as bizarre as a clown's.

"First Knight Mercedes, I sentence you to death."

The Fourth Knight's punishment began. The moment Gyuratan gave the order, five Red Knights attacked Mercedes.

*Supaak!*

Mercedes spun around in her pure white clothing. She rotated while pulling out two swords, soundlessly cutting apart the flowers and trees in the beautiful garden. Blood splashed from the chest of the Red Knights.

Gyuratan clicked his tongue. "Knights in the 20s aren't enough."

These weak people were really of no help.

"They aren't that far from the squad of Red Knights that I killed." As Gyuratan spat out those shocking words, Mercedes flew toward him like a butterfly. Gyuratan saw Mercedes' exposed thighs, but there was no desire in his eyes. Sexual desire was something only lowly creatures like humans and animals felt.

*Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!*

Just before Mercedes' two swords reached Gyuratan...

"Uh!"

Black magic power was released, and it hit Mercedes. The unexpected form of the counterattack caused Mercedes to panic and cross her swords.

*Kwajajajak!*

However, it was impossible to defend against magic with just two swords. The absence of body armor was too big. Blood spurted out as Mercedes flew through the sky and hit the wall of her mansion. Gyuratan laughed while approaching her slowly. Covered in demonic energy, his skin was pale and his eyes were all black, without any whites.

"In the past 12 years, I have been irritated by your eyes. Your clear eyes seem to penetrate all hidden secrets like a curse. I wanted to rip them out every time I saw them. I wanted to see your pained appearance."

*"Pant... Pant... You..."*

"But Limit trusted you so much. I couldn't see any gaps to break through. *Kukuk*, the story changed after you were stupid enough to start digging into Limit." Gyuratan reached out a wrinkled hand. His long fingernails headed toward Mercedes' eyes. "Thank you for digging your grave yourself. Watch in limbo. Scream in pain and sorrow at the sight of the empire that you wanted to protect so much."

"*Ugh...!*" Her body wasn't listening. The deadly demonic energy, more poisonous than any poison, was strangling Mercedes' heart.

As she waited for death, unable to resist...

"That woman is mine," a male voice rang out.

*Puk!*

*Puuok!*

A golden spear filled with divine power flew and pierced Gyuratan.

"Overgeared King...?" Gyuratan, who had barely overcome Rebecca's curse, cried out with astonishment while Mercedes recalled a fairy tale she had read as a child.

# Chapter 797

[You have been discovered by a magic power detector!]

[The effect of the Hooded Zip Up has been rendered ineffective and Stealth has been turned off.]

[The magic power detector is looking at you, and any actions considered dangerous in the next three minutes will cause it to strike.]

He had seen this happen dozens of times since he first entered Titan. Grid became a person in a plain white hooded outfit.

'How much money do they have?'

It wasn't just the palace — the magic power detectors were installed in ordinary stores, even including the slums. Just this was a small glimpse of the great wealth and technological prowess of the empire that ruled the continent for hundreds of years.

'I can't draw any attention to myself.'

Grid barely escaped the palace, suppressing the urge to rush as he headed to the north gate. He boldly walked down the street without covering his face and ID. Satisfy had a huge player count of two billion: wouldn't there be at least one or two people with the ID of Grid? When he walked by on the street, he looked like a passerby to the people around him. There wasn't a single person who observed him closely. If he hid his identity and acted suspiciously, he would become more noticeable.

*Kwaang!*

"...?"

The relatively quiet north street. Grid entered a new area without much difficulty since people were concentrating on the south wall. Grid suddenly stopped, hearing a loud sound at the end of the quiet street. Grid had heard this sound thousands, if not tens of thousands of times.

‘Combat? Who is fighting here?’

Grid could ignore it. He needed to get away from Titan as soon as possible, and not get caught up in an unknown fight. But Grid found it hard to just walk away. This was because a golden exclamation mark shone in the direction where the fighting was heard.

A quest signal!

‘A quest at this time?’

Who in the empire would give him a quest in this turmoil?

‘Who is associated with me?’

Grid found it hard to imagine, but he didn’t give up and kept thinking. As a result, he could recall one person with surprising speed.

“...Mercedes!”

The First Knight who shared a secret with Grid. She was committed to revealing the truth about what happened 12 years ago. In some cases, there was the risk of being exposed. The moment he thought about this, “Quick Movements!”

Grid didn’t delay and rushed over. Since Blackening was on cooldown, he used Quick Movements to greatly increase his agility and ran over to the scene of the battle. From there...

“Thank you for digging your grave yourself. Watch in limbo. Scream in pain and sorrow at the sight of the empire that you wanted to protect so much.”

A middle-aged man, who looked like a more bizarre version of Grid’s Blackening form, was threatening Mercedes. She was wearing a white dress and coughing up black blood. Grid received a notification window.

[A new quest has been created!]

[For Piaro]

## ★ Hidden Quest ★

First Knight Mercedes, who was digging into the truth about what happened 12 years ago, is experiencing a great crisis.

If you are unable to save her, Piaro will forever be labeled a traitor.

Save Mercedes!

Quest Clear Conditions: The survival of Mercedes.

Quest Reward: 50 increase in affinity with Mercedes. An event with Mercedes will occur.

Quest Failure: Mercedes' death. All quests related to the Red Knights will be deleted.

'Isn't this funny?'

Grid couldn't understand what was happening. Why was Mercedes in such trouble despite being comparable to Piaro? And where in the world was her iconic red armor?

'In any case, this is a game.'

He was sick of the formula of a strong enemy being nerfed as soon as they turned friendly. Grid transformed one of the four God Hands into Lifael's Spear. In the battle with Immortal, only one God Hand transformed so the remaining three God Hands were available to be transformed into items.

"Ugh..."

The moment Mercedes moaned and was on the brink of death.

"That woman is mine," shouted Grid as he gave an order to Lifael's Spear.

*Puooook!*

[You have dealt 26,900 damage to the target!]

The enigmatic man threatening Mercedes coughed up blood and stepped back. The fact that Lifael's Spear caused enormous damage showed that he was obviously a demonkin. And demonkin were helpless in front of Rebecca's divine artifacts. Grid expected the demonkin called 'Gyuratan' to not be able to move for a while. He planned to use this gap to save Mercedes.

However.

"Overgeared King...?"

Gyuratan was fine, unlike Grid's expectations. He pulled out Lifael's Spear that pierced his waist. His health gauge was also intact.

"Transcendent named?"

A chill went down Grid's spine. After running as hard as possible, he was almost at Mercedes' location. This meant he was close to Gyuratan.

"Mercedes! You were in league with the Overgeared King! This has made your betrayal clear!" Gyuratan shouted excitedly.

There was a smile of joy on his face as he stabbed towards Grid, who was reaching for Mercedes. The weapon that Gyuratan wielded was a twisted, bizarre looking sword that was similar to its master.

*Kwaaaaang!*

"...!"

Gyuratan was shocked. He thought that he had stabbed Grid while Grid was paying attention to Mercedes, only for two golden hands to fly and block his sword.

'Autonomous artifacts?'

One person passed through Gyuratan's mind. He made a strange expression as the God Hand armed with the Ultimate Enhanced Mjolnir flew towards him. Lifael's Spear, which had fallen onto the ground, also aimed at Gyuratan. Gyuratan allowed an attack from another golden hand and Lifael's Spear, which flew from behind. Despite the

numerous attacks, he was fine and only became stiff for a moment. Gyuratan withdrew the golden spear from his chest and didn't release it.

"I see. Overgeared King and Templar... No, Overgeared."

Over the past few years, there was the unprecedented event in which Yatan Servants were slaughtered throughout the continent. The culprit was Overgeared. He was a strong man who had artifacts that moved by themselves.

"Kukuk, you aren't an ordinary person. You managed to build a kingdom. It is no wonder that you can kill the Yatan Servants."

"Who are you?"

Few people knew that Grid was the Yatan Servant Slaughterer. Braham and Yura were the only ones who knew the relationship between Grid and the Yatan Church. Yet this demonkin grasped Grid's identity at once, meaning that he had a close relationship with the Yatan Church.

"Are you also a Yatan Servant?"

Gyuratan nodded at Grid's question. "You could say that. All creatures under heaven are the servants of God Yatan."

This wasn't the answer he wanted. Grid started frowning.

"Be careful!" Mercedes was staring at Grid only to suddenly shout, "He will use black magic!"

"What?"

His opponent quickly neutralized the two swords wielded by the God Hands, Lifael's Spear, and the stiffness of Mjolnir, just to use magic? Grid became alert, but it was too late. Gyuratan had started casting the magic circle from the moment he began the conversation with Grid. A spell started forming under Grid's feet.

"Naive guy," Gyuratan ridiculed.

*Kuwaaaaah!*

A big explosion occurred at Grid's feet, causing a gigantic hellfire to billow out and swallow Grid and Mercedes at the same time. The momentum reminded Grid of Hell Gao before the fire stones were mined.

"It is my unexpected luck to be able to handle two troublemakers at the same time."

Gyuratan was delighted. He believed that Grid and Mercedes would vanish without a trace after being swallowed by the black flames. No humans could survive when hit directly with this magic.

'Now how should I weave these two together?'

*Sururuk.*

His pale skin started to fill with rosy color as his whites appeared amidst his pitch-black eyes. He returned to his human form, no, disguised himself as human and wondered how to report today's events to the emperor. He never imagined that he would be hit back.

"What is your weakness?"

"...?!"

Did Grid use his body as a shield? Through the smoke, Mercedes was held up in Grid's arms and didn't have a single scratch on her. It felt like Grid alone had endured the explosion. Yet there was a problem.

"Why are you fine?"

Grid didn't have any outstanding injuries, an unbelievable fact given that he had just encountered hellfire.

"Don't you know why I am called the Overgeared King?"

Grid's sword struck Gyuratan.

*Puooook!*

Gyuratan had exposed a gap while caught off guard. He couldn't defend himself as his heart was pierced with the Enlightenment Sword. A human's weapon was powerful

enough to compare to the divine artifact of Rebecca, Goddess of Light.

“Cough!”

Gyuratan’s coughed up blood and Lifael’s Spear in his hand returned to being a God Hand after the duration of Item Transformation ended. Gyuratan grabbed the God Hand that was fiercely trying to escape.

*Kwajijik!*

That’s when he was struck by the red lightning that fell from the sky. Gyuratan’s body shook while Grid performed a sword dance.

“Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!”

*Puok!*

*Puk puk puk!*

Powerful stabs started continuously piercing Gyuratan’s body.

*Kwa kwa kwa kwang!*

Black flames exploded. The flames contained a destructive power that was comparable to the hellfire that Gyuratan summoned, but without any casting delays. Gyuratan and Mercedes were shocked.

“Kuk...! Y-You...!”

Gyuratan started emitting demonic energy again. Grid didn’t shrink back at all despite facing bizarre black eyes.

“You must be a scum who has already lost his body to Muller.”

*Kwarururung!*

Linked Kill swallowed up Gyuratan. As Gyuratan’s flesh scattered and body was torn apart, Grid’s sword energy skyrocketed. There were also the four God Hands armed with Failure, the White Tiger Sword, Iyarugt, and Grid’s Greatsword.

"Isn't it too early to be elated?"

A cynical remark.

*Seokeok!*

Grid's Pinnacle was deployed. As it cut from head to groin, the four other top weapons pierced Gyuratan.

*Kuwaaaaang!*

Black flames once again exploded and swallowed up Gyuratan.

"..."

Mercedes was unable to say anything. She had seen Piaro and the great dukes, yet Grid's firepower was one step above theirs. The power of Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle was unrivaled.

"Hurry."

"...Huh?"

Would Grid defeat the unidentified great demon like this? Mercedes was filled with expectations only to become confused. It was because Grid, who was overpowering Gyuratan, started retreating. Grid explained, "Wake up. People will be coming soon. I'll be in trouble if I'm caught up in this mess."

In the first place.

'I can't win.'

Despite being weakened and sealed by Sword Saint Muller, the opponent was still a great demon. Grid had no chance in a 1:1 or 1:2 confrontation. In the past, the reason why Grid was able to raid Hell Gao was because he found the weak point of the fire stones. In fact, Gyuratan's health hadn't even decreased by one-tenth.

"By the way, where did you sell your armor?"

Grid grabbed Mercedes's hand and asked a question while running.

"I-I didn't sell it! How could I sell such a noble symbol for money?" Mercedes shouted with a red face.

Grid could see that she was a serious person who didn't know jokes. Yes, she was serious. For her, the touch of the 'man' tightly holding her hand was very special.

# Chapter 798

The gates came into view.

“Wait a minute!” Mercedes, who was pulled by Grid, suddenly stopped. She watched the soldiers guarding the gate and gently pulled her hand away from Grid. There was a dark flush on her white face, and the feeling of Grid’s touch lingered on her fingertips.

“Why? What’s going on?”

“Where are you going to take me?”

“Outside the empire, of course.”

“What? I can’t leave.”

“What?” Grid frowned. “Was that guy called Gyuratan? From his attitude earlier, he seems to occupy a high position in the empire?”

Grid had noticed that the empire didn’t know Gyuratan’s identity. The demonkin were common enemies of humanity. So, if the Saharan Empire knew that Gyuratan was a great demon, they wouldn’t be able to stand by. The reason Mercedes was in a crisis was due to Gyuratan’s trick.

“He said that you are a traitor. Aren’t you in a very dangerous situation? He will frame you like he did Piaro in the past.”

“But I have an obligation to inform everyone about Gyuratan’s identity.”

“Do you think people will believe you?”

Mercedes smiled bitterly at Grid’s question and replied, “Nobody will believe me. I can’t believe it myself.”

It had been 15 years since Gyuratan became the Fourth Knight. He had acted as a perfect human for many years. Even with her sharp eyes, Mercedes, as well as the famous magicians and priests, hadn’t noticed for the past 15 years that Gyuratan was

a great demon. Gyuratan's ability to hide his demonic power was beyond extraordinary. It was clearly the power of a great demon. Despite being weakened, his power was still enough to mock humans.

"But if I wait, I will be able to catch an opportunity. I will keep my position until that day comes. It is my duty."

Now that an unidentified great demon was about to bring the empire to chaos, the First Knight must stop him. This was a noble mission. She couldn't turn away and didn't want to turn away. Grid gave an uncertain response to Mercedes' resolute expression, "If Gyuratan tells the emperor that you and I were together today..."

She would disappear before the chance she waited for would come. However, Mercedes smiled brightly at Grid with a smile that was brighter than sunshine.

'She could smile like this?'

It didn't fit the appearance of a noble knight. Grid admired her beauty and couldn't help turning red.

Mercedes blushed at his reaction and avoided his gaze as she explained, "I will deny it. Just like how people won't believe my claims that Gyuratan is a great demon, people won't believe the claims that Gyuratan places on me. But if I run away like this, I will have no chance to deny it. So I will stay."

"In the worst case scenario, what if Gyuratan attacks you directly? Like today. What will you do then? I won't be able to help you."

"Who do you think I am?" A light shone in Mercedes' clear eyes. It was a glimpse into the pride of the First Knight of the empire. The strongest knight who made Grid bow down at their very first meeting was now here. "Today, things turned out bad in many ways. But if I fight him again next time, I can do my best."

She hadn't taken her armor because it was her detention period, and she had allowed Gyuratan's magic because she had believed he was a swordsman. Moreover, in the first place, her morale had been at the lowest point. In a situation where she hadn't known who to believe and had gotten trapped in her house, she had become restless and confused.

However, she was okay now. She knew that Gyuratan was an enemy, and there was

someone she could rely on. The fog before her dissipated.

"Overgeared King."

"Yes?"

"Don't worry. I will clear the wrongful accusation of the Piaro you cherish as I promised."

"...Yes."

Grid was well aware of the Piaro's past pain. He desperately wanted to remove Piaro's stigma and free him from the bondage of his dark past. Additionally...

"You must stay safe."

Grid also wanted Mercedes. He needed people with strength and talent, and Mercedes was a person close to what he wanted. Mercedes stiffened like she was frozen before she asked, "...Do you like me?"

It was a difficult question. Grid nodded. "It isn't just liking but coveting. I think about it every night."

Who in the world wouldn't covet a noble knight like her? However, among them, Grid was the one who knew her value best. Grid's words contained this meaning, but Mercedes accepted them differently. Her ears flushed red, and she couldn't face Grid. "You are too aggressive. Are you like this to everyone?"

Mercedes' question was basically asking if he was a womanizer. However, Grid didn't realize it. "No, I'm not like this to everyone. I also know that I shouldn't say this, but what can I do? You are special."

He knew that she was already the empire's knight, but he wanted to make her his own knight. Grid's ardent heart was distorted while it was being conveyed.

"I-Is that so?" Mercedes was wary of Grid's attitude.

"This man isn't ordinary'

Grid must live as a playboy. He seemed like a person who would have a woman around

him every day. However, Mercedes didn't hate it. Grid was Piaro's and Asmophel's benefactor. He was also the one who provided the opportunity to wash away the stigma of the old Red Knights, as well as the savior of her life. So, he no longer seemed like a bad person.

"I won't ask you why you are in Titan right now. I won't doubt my benefactor. However, please stop shaking my heart. Nothing can happen anyway."

As the empire's knight, how could she marry the king of an outside kingdom? That would be forsaking the empire. It was impossible. The moment that Mercedes smiled bitterly... Grid caught Mercedes' wrist in order to express his strong will. Then he declared, "I won't give up on you. Didn't you say it when you were reunited with Piaro? You will repay me even if you have to give everything to me. Don't you have to keep your promise?"

"...So, you don't want a lover or a wife but a slave."

"Huh?"

"You are crass."

"...??"

What the hell was this? Grid was embarrassed as he belatedly realized it. He was reminded of the power of his dexterity, but he had already touched Mercedes' wrist.

"It is too much harassment to caress the body of a woman with those greedy eyes. In return for saving my life, you want such things in exchange?"

"..."

The reward he got from clearing the quest clear was being misunderstood as a pervert? Grid was embarrassed and disappointed.

"...If you want that, it can't be helped," Mercedes spoke meaningfully and raised her hand to her slender neck. Grid's gaze fixed on her collarbone, and he gulped nervously. However, it wasn't the development he thought it would be. Mercedes released the pendant hanging around her neck and handed it to Grid. It was a pendant made of white silver with an elegant rose pattern.

"This is...?"

"It is a token of my family. If you ever face an awkward situation in the empire, use this token. It will help you."

*Ttiring~*

[The hidden quest has been completed!]

[Affinity with Mercedes has risen by 50.]

[You have obtained the Vaintz Family's Pendant.]

[Vaintz Family's Pendant]

[Durability: 31/33

Charm +100.

Nobility +100.

-A pendant passed down through the direct line of the prestigious Vaintz family in the Saharan Empire. It can be used to prove your identity in all places of the empire. There is a high probability of receiving great respect.

Weight: 5

Conditions of Use: The heir of the Vaintz family or someone recognized by the heir.]

"Isn't this precious?"

It was a token that symbolized Mercedes, who was the heir, or someone closely related to her. Strictly speaking, it was strange for Grid to receive it. Mercedes shook her head at his concern. "It is a trivial thing for me, king of a nation."

'Rubbish.'

This item demonstrated ‘status’ across the Saharan Empire. It meant that Grid could move freely through the empire, no matter his appearance. It would surely come in handy.

“It is really okay? What if I abuse it and put your family at risk?”

“Didn’t Piaro and Asmophel choose Your Majesty? I don’t think someone like you would abuse it. Even if you do abuse it, you would have a good reason. I will accept the damages caused as my price.”

“...Okay. Does this mean you will keep your word?” Grid grinned.

Mercedes’ straightforward personality was a favorite for him. The more he knew, the more he trusted her.

“Thank you.” Grid said a short goodbye.

Meanwhile, Mercedes went down on one knee and politely spoke, “I appreciate it, Overgeared King.”

“Good luck.”

“I must achieve it, for the sake of the empire and Piaro.”

Then Grid would safely meet Mercedes again.

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“You came back without running away? Are you that eager to die?”

Mercedes returned to her mansion where Gyuratan was waiting. His tone and attitude were the same as always. It was as if nothing had happened a few hours ago. After confirming there was no one else around, Mercedes said mockingly, “Didn’t you expect me to come back?”

“Well, I didn’t want you to come back.”

If Mercedes had gone with Grid, Gyuratan would’ve put all type of false charges against her to the emperor. It would also be possible to destroy her family by turning them into rebels. However, she hadn’t run away and had eventually returned instead.

Fortunately, it wasn't a big problem. It would be fine if he killed her.

"It is easy to falsify information about sins. There would be quite a backlash, but it's fine if I kill everyone just as I did with Piaro's family. *Kukukuk!*" Gyuratan smiled wickedly. His tone and attitude were like those of a great demon.

Why did he mention Piaro to Mercedes? Obviously, it was a taunt. There was no way Mercedes wouldn't be able to see through it.

"Such trivial provocation, it isn't suitable for a great demon."

"..."

"Well, I am nervous and can't easily control myself. If you fight me while I'm fully prepared, great turmoil can't be avoided and your identity might be revealed. Now, tell me. What do you want to do?"

Looking at Mercedes, Gyuratan realized something. "Are you trying to make a deal with me?"

Originally, making deals was the specialty of a great demon, not the contractor. Few people were able to reject the temptation of a great demon. Mercedes knew this.

Gyuratan said, "I don't want us to interfere with each other. The fact that I'm a great demon can't be revealed to the end. I am the great demon, Astaroth. Until the desire of the human who summoned me is fully achieved, my presence has to be thoroughly masked. I will use my power to oppose everything for the fulfillment of my contract."

"Summoner...?"

Mercedes had overlooked one thing.

'Who is the summoner?'

Who had summoned a great demon to infiltrate the palace? Mercedes' eyes were very shaky. However, Gyuratan looked satisfied. "*Kukuk!* My summoner is someone you know well."

"Who is it?"

"How can I tell you? A demon's contract is based on a definite agreement. The damage that the contractor will suffer is enormous and even a great demon can't bear it. But let me give you a hint. It isn't the woman you expect."

'It isn't Marie?'

"Compared to her, they are very close to the emperor." Gyuratan smiled widely enough for the corners of his mouth to reach his ears.

Mercedes' face was turning blue. It was hard to see 'close' as a physical distance. In this case, it meant flesh and blood.

"Don't tell me it is one of the princes?"

"My hints ends here. It is obvious that the person behind me isn't easy. On the other hand, what about you? You haven't earned the trust of the emperor from the beginning and you have rejected the empress' hand. You also ruined your relationship with Sword Duke Limit, the man who trusted you. The knights that envy you? They are merely sheep. They can't help you. Mercedes, you are alone. You are thoroughly helpless. You can't threaten me."

These were whispers which caused the spirit to become helpless.

"Unfortunately, I also can't threaten you. I don't want to deal with you right now, so I also have to take a great risk."

His trump card of magic was lost. Mercedes' skills were acknowledged by a great demon. Of course, he was in a weakened state, so he had to acknowledge it.

"Therefore, I propose that we watch each other. It won't be so bad for you. Don't you need time to accumulate enough power to resist me?"

The great demon's temptation... it wasn't as sweet as the rumors said.

'I need to earn His Majesty's trust urgently.'

Mercedes nodded while in deep thought, making Gyuratan laugh.

# Chapter 799

“*Sigh.*” Grid was able to breathe once he escaped from Titan. He utilized the stealth function of the Hooded Zip-up to avoid the magic power detectors and lively soldiers. Was it because his control skills had risen? No, his senses were a bit sharper now.

“Great demon...”

Grid could still see a small fraction of the huge exterior walls of Titan. The sky above it was completely gray. The gathering of heavy clouds foretold rain and thunder would arrive after a while.

‘What great demon is he?’

Hell Gao, Furfu, Drasion, Morax, Astaroth—this was the list of great demons sealed by Sword Saint Muller, the greatest legend in history. Gyuratan was certainly one of them.

‘He isn’t Hell Gao.’

Hell Gao was the owner of hellfire and had descended on an unspecified cycle in the body of a low-grade demonkin. It wasn’t in the empire but on Cork Island.

‘He isn’t Drasion.’

According to the information that Grid gained from Kraugel in the past, he already guessed that Kraugel had raided Drasion. If it had been in the middle of the empire, a few witnesses would’ve seen Kraugel raiding him.

‘Of course, it isn’t Furfu.’

After recalling that Agnus had used Furfu’s power, Grid reduced the possibilities of Gyuratan’s identity to Morax or Astaroth. Among them, Astaroth probably had the power of lightning and it was likely he was related to the thunder stone, but Grid didn’t know about Morax. (*TL: I think I previously translated thunder stone as ure stone. It will now be changed to thunder stone.*)

‘Mercedes must be safe.’

He knew her well. It wasn't likely that she would be easily caught by pure force. The weakened great demon was so low in power that it couldn't compare with the complete great demon.

'I think that guy called Gyuratan is very cunning.' Grid recalled the great demon and shook his head. 'But it isn't a problem for me to worry about.'

This was a matter within the empire. He had no choice but to hope that Mercedes overcame the crisis. The moment that Grid turned his back to Titan...

"Overgeared King."

Grid was approached by a suspicious figure in a hat and forsythia-colored robes. Thanks to his high insight stat, Grid became alert. "You know me? Who are you?"

The person took off their hat. Then the color of the name was revealed, showing he was an NPC. "I am Raji, a magician of the Tower of Eternity. The owner of the tower, Goldhit, is looking forward to your visit. I hope Your Majesty will respond to the invitation."

"The Tower of Eternity?"

Grid could use the Magic Missile and Magic Detection which had been given to him by Braham. Additionally, he had the potential to learn Fireball if he increased his intelligence. However, he wasn't a magician. He had never heard of the Tower of Eternity.

'What is the Tower of Eternity?' Grid's knee jerk reaction was to ask this, but he judged that it wouldn't be good to expose his lack of knowledge to a stranger. In such a situation, he relied on Lauel.

*-Lauel.*

*-Yes, Your Majesty,* a reply came as soon as Grid sent a whisper. It seemed that Lauel had been waiting since Grid infiltrated the empire alone.

*-What is the Tower of Eternity?*

*-A magic tower belonging to the Saharan Empire. It is rumored that the emperor relies on the Tower of Eternity as well as the Tower of the Sun. The master of the tower, Goldhit,*

*is one of the ten great magicians on the continent.*

'Isn't this huge?' Grid was startled.

*-Then why do they want to see me?*

*-Huh? Have you been discovered in the empire? Are you currently in danger?*

*-No. I quietly handled my work and left Titan. Then a magician was waiting for me. He knew my identity and invited me.*

What? They came to invite Grid instead of arresting him?

*-Invite... no, maybe not. Lauel's voice was excited. -It is true that the magicians of the Tower of Eternity are part of the empire's forces, but that is only a story for wartime. Usually, the Tower of Eternity is an institution that is secluded from the world and is unlikely to be involved in the empire's political situation.*

*-Then it is a pure invitation?*

*-Yes. Please accept the invitation. The Tower of Eternity is famous as a place to give hidden quests. There are many magicians lining up to be invited to the Tower of Eternity.*

'This... '

There was a reason for Lauel's excitement. The giddy Grid was about to respond to Raji's invitation straight away only to stop. There was a part that was suspicious.

*-By the way. The magician called Goldhit knows that I am a king yet they didn't invite me in person. Instead, they sent their man? Isn't it polite to come personally?*

This wasn't a sensitive reaction but a common sense one. It was clear that the person named Goldhit was making fun of the Overgeared Kingdom. With his status, Grid couldn't just overlook it.

Lauel explained, *-Goldhit isn't an opponent to discuss manners with. The masters of the Tower of Eternity and the Tower of the Sun are the magicians of the king. Goldhit would be over 120 years old this year. They have been the strongest magician for more than a century. If Emperor Juander wants to see Goldhit, he has to come to the Tower of Eternity.*

‘A person who can make the emperor move directly?’

Grid’s expectations gradually grew. Why would the master of a tower famous for giving hidden quests want to meet Grid?

‘Will I get a huge hidden quest?’

In the end...

“I understand. I will accept the invitation.” Grid nodded to the waiting magician, Raji.



The 80th floor of the Tower of Eternity...

There was only one person who could climb to the top of the tower, which was so high that all of Titan could be seen at a glance. Goldhit was a great magician who boasted unique strength among the 10 great magicians. People said that if she pursued power, she would be a person of authority right now.

In fact, many people believed that she could’ve built a huge magical nation comparable to the Saharan Empire. Goldhit was that great of a figure. However, she had little influence on Satisfy’s present worldview because she secluded herself from the world. Unless they were high-level magicians, normal players would never see the name ‘Goldhit’.

“I wasn’t fully trained in Teacher Braham’s enhanced magic.”

Braham’s fourth disciple was a genius. It was said that there were no magicians more talented than her on the entire continent. However, that was a story among ordinary people. Her talent was mere dust before Braham’s talent, and she couldn’t follow her mentor’s teachings.

Goldhit was resentful that she was his student. She became aware of the existence of enhanced magic, but she was frustrated because she couldn’t receive the important magical theory. Just a little...

If she could really understand the theory behind enhanced magic, she could strengthen her talent and awaken as a legend. For Goldhit who had spent many years

grumbling about reality, Grid's appearance was like a ray of light. Goldhit didn't know how excited she became when Grid assimilated with Braham's soul and learned the enhanced magic. Now, finally...

"The opportunity has come." Goldhit looked at Grid in the crystal sphere and smiled.  
"Magic Detection."

*Shaaaaaaah-*

The master-level detection wrapped around the Tower of Eternity. Simultaneously, all of Goldhit's nerves were focused on feeling Grid's mana.

"Come on, show me Braham's enhanced magic. *Yohohoho...*"

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"Thunder stone?"

After Grid was guided by Raji to the Tower of Eternity, he spotted an extra large stone at the top of the tower. It was a transparent stone containing a huge thunderbolt. This made it seem like an enlarged thunder stone was decorating the top of the tower.

'I don't know what it means. In the first place, how did the thunder stone get that big?'

Grid was feeling doubtful when he heard Raji's voice, "You have to go up alone from the 10th floor to the 20th floor. It is a field to test whether you deserve to be a guest of the tower and is part of the tower's history. I hope that Your Majesty isn't offended."

Inviting a guest only to test them? Grid felt somewhat uncomfortable, but it was difficult to say anything if it was a tradition of the tower. Then he quickly noticed, 'This test should be a quest.'

As such, his expectations rose further. Grid followed Raji and reached the 10th floor of the tower. Raji then politely said goodbye and withdrew. "Good luck."

Simultaneously...

[A quest has been created.]

[The Tower of Eternity]

### [★ Hidden Quest ★

The Tower of Eternity is the tallest tower in history. Not just anyone can access it.

Your mind will gain enlightenment every time you climb a floor that contains the essence of knowledge and wisdom.

Quest Clear Conditions: Break through the gateways to climb the tower. Currently, you can break through up to the 20th floor.

Quest Clear Compensation: Every time you climb a floor in the tower, your intelligence will permanently increase by 2.

Quest Failure: Return to the 10th floor.]

“Amazing!” Grid was forced to cheer.

Every time he climbed a tower floor, he would permanently get 2 intelligence stats. The reward was beyond imagination.

‘It is intelligence.’

If Grid were an ordinary blacksmith, it would be a rather useless reward.

However, Grid was Pagma's Descendant and Braham's disciple. His skills consumed a lot of mana and he had the potential to acquire all of Braham's enhanced magic. As such, the intelligence stat was important to him. It was true that his priorities were strength and stamina, but it was a bit tricky that a fixed number of stat points were forcibly invested in intelligence every time he leveled up. How happy was he to get a chance to raise his intelligence stat?

‘I can go up to the 20th floor, so this is 20 intelligence points?’

The excited Grid opened the firmly closed door on the 10th floor. There was a circular arena inside. Unlike what he could see from the outside, the inside of the 10th floor was very large. It was bigger than the training grounds which could fit hundreds of the Overgeared soldiers.

[The Tower of Eternity's Guardian has appeared!]

*Kwaaaaah!*

The guardian's identity was a golem. The enemy who had just appeared seemed to make the entire tower shake as it instantly struck at Grid. It was very big. However, due to the golem's very slow nature, Grid wasn't burdened. He avoided the golem's attack and swung the Enlightenment Sword.

*Jeeeeeeong!*

It was a powerful blow! The gray golem's thick waist was hit with the Enlightenment Sword. However...

[You have dealt 1 damage to the target.]

“Full physical resistance?”

The golem was fine. It ignored Grid's consecutive attacks like they were mosquitoes flying about and just waved its arms.

*Kung! Kwang!*

The golem's arms hit the ground instead of Grid, but this alone was a threat to him. The massive weight behind the attack caused Grid's balance to collapse. Goldhit smiled as she watched Grid's crisis through the crystal ball.

‘The tower’s guardians can only be handled with magic. In the end, you will have to use magic. Come on. Use the sweet enhanced magic and let me get a glimpse of the glory.’

The moment that Goldhit was becoming desperate...

*Peng!*

*Kwarururung!*

Inside the crystal ball, many flames flared up in succession and swallowed up the guardian. This was the power of the ‘fire emission’ attached to the Enlightenment Sword. The flames dealt 5,000 fire damage to the target.

“...????” Goldhit was stunned.

# Chapter 800

'That magic sword can wreak that much havoc alone?'

A magic sword could only be created by combining the strengths of a magician and a blacksmith. Although a blacksmith or magician could sometimes produce it alone, this was a very rare occurrence. Goldhit had past experiences of producing magic battle gear with blacksmiths and knew this. 'It is difficult to produce such a magic weapon alone.'

There were three types of magic weapons.

Firstly, there was a magic battle gear imbued with complete magic. In this case, it was possible to consume the user's mana when the magic was used.

Secondly, there was a magic battle gear enhanced with magic. It increased the magic power of the wearer.

Thirdly, there was a magic battle gear containing a pure attribute. It consumed the wearer's mana while having a certain probability of releasing fire, ice, electricity, and so on. It wasn't very powerful despite being able to express the pure power of an attribute.

The sword Grid was currently using was the third type. However, the user's mana wasn't being consumed. The atmospheric mana was used every time flames were released. Thus, the user wasn't tired, and the power of the flames was huge. This was a weapon which would appear in legends.

'A legendary sword...!'

As Goldhit recalled that Grid was Pagma's Descendant, all her nerves concentrated on Grid's long sword. She saw that it wasn't made out of an ordinary material.

'Demonic energy? Don't tell me...?'

The story of Grid defeating the Great Demon Belial was already well known, so Goldhit could easily guess what type of material the sword was made out of.

‘A by-product of Belial!’

For sure, this sword would be worshipped as a legendary sword later on. Additionally, it was likely that Grid had made it personally. Goldhit got goosebumps. How many years had it been since she felt such admiration for someone? Looking back on her faint memories, it seemed to have happened half a century ago. A dark smile appeared on Goldhit’s face as her impression of Grid changed. He was no longer just the beneficiary of enhanced magic. She now accepted him as a greater person.

‘In fact, it was like this from the beginning.’

Grid was a legend, the hero of a nation... He was a person who had built a new kingdom and was a hero of heroes. Now that her narrow-mindedness caused by her obsession with enhanced magic was released, Goldhit had genuine respect for Grid.

‘A hero that transcends the era... It is right to greet him politely’

However...

‘I can’t forget my original purpose.’

Respect and purpose were separate things. She wanted to be respectful to Grid, but she needed to do what she had to do. Goldhit needed to encourage Grid to use enhanced magic. She checked on Grid, who was on the 16th floor, and pulled out her trump card.

“Let’s try the lilith guardian.”

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[You have dealt 1 damage to the target.]

[You have dealt 1...]

[The Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires has emitted flames. It deals 5,000 fixed fire damage to the target.]

The Enlightenment Sword had ‘a certain chance to release large flames with every attack.’ Based on Grid’s experience, the probability of that was around 30%. As the

number of attacks increased, the probability of releasing flames would increase exponentially. It also had a very good compatibility with Alex's Quick Gloves which raised Grid's basic attack speed.

In comparison to Grid's black flames, the ordinary fire released by the Enlightenment Sword had low power and was often useless against enemies with high fire resistance because it had a pure fire attribute. However, it was useful in situations like the one Grid was currently in. The Enlightenment Sword was sometimes more capable than the black flames which were separated as physical attacks.

'There are many item options remaining.'

A huge smile appeared on Grid's face!

Wasn't this a huge stroke of luck? Grid smiled as he saw that his intelligence stat had increased by 12 points, and he ascended to the 16th floor. He had been able to handle all the guardians while climbing up here and didn't feel any great tension. That said, this didn't mean he wasn't being vigilant.

'Isn't this different?'

*Snap!*

Grid opened the door to the 16th floor without a hitch and looked at the features of the waiting guardian.

Its physique was very small and was at the level of a normal adult male, so there wasn't any big pressure. However, it was less likely for monsters on the higher floors to be weaker than monsters on the lower floor. So, it was ridiculous to judge the difficulty level based on the monster's outward appearance.

'It reminds me of Braham's golems...'

Grid recalled the golem invasion of Reinhardt from years ago. The humanoid golems with small physiques had caused the most casualties. Their strength, which had been incomparable to that of ordinary golems, was still vivid in his memories.

'Doesn't this golem look similar? Am I mistaken?'

[Lilith Guardian]

Grid looked at the name and appearance of the monster before trying to grasp the type of metal its body was made of.

*"Kuk!"*

However, he then reflexively raised his sword. It was because the guardian narrowed the distance with footwork reminiscent of Yangban Garam's Shunpo and suddenly appeared in front of Grid's nose.

*Peeeeeeong!*

Shockwaves broke out the moment the Enlightenment Sword collided with the guardian's fist. One of the 16th floor's inner walls and a part of the ceiling collapsed. Grid ignored the rain of stones and fought back, hitting the guardian before seizing the moment to raise his sword. As he linked attacks without stopping, he judged that the act of widening the distance against the guardian would be bad. So, Grid kept wielding his sword and didn't give the guardian a break.

*Kaang! Kakakang!*

Every time Grid hit the guardian, it suffered one point of damage. Like the previous guardians, this one was resistant to physical attacks. There was no defense against a man who cut and stabbed while unafraid of being hit. The guardian punched with its right fist when Grid slashed and responded with its left fist when Grid stabbed it in the center.

[You have suffered 1,900 damage.]

[You have suffered 1,780 damage.]

[You have suffered 1,910 damage.]

The damage that Grid received was accumulating. Despite the outward appearance of the fight, Grid was being struck one-sidedly. Yet he wasn't irritated and waited for the release of the flames.

*Peeng!*

Finally, the Enlightenment Sword burned red. However...

[You have dealt 1,660 damage to the target!]

'What? Why is its fire resistance so high?'

The guardian's health gauge only received a small scratch as the total health was also high. It was difficult to tell how long the guardian would take to die if Grid only relied on the release of flames which dealt a small amount of damage. Maybe Grid's stamina would be depleted quicker than it would take for the guardian to die.

*Jjejeeeong!*

The guardian ignored the Enlightenment Sword, jumped into the air, and kicked out. Grid's vision filled with the crumbling ceiling as he flew backward. Meanwhile...

"*Yohohoho... Is it hard to hold on?*" Goldhit, who was on the 80th floor, saw Grid's shaky eyes clearly.

In fact, at first, she had chills.

She had been amazed beyond admiration when she saw Grid respond to the guardian's first space jump using the magic, Blink. She knew that Pagma's Descendant was a blacksmith and swordsman, but she had never dreamt that Grid would show such strength and agility. Yes, Grid was much more outstanding than rumored. Maybe the empire had underestimated him.

'But... '

Resistance was a factor that neutralized strength. In order for Grid to defeat the guardian with excellent fire resistance, he had to discard the sword and bring out magic. Goldhit's expectations had reached their peak. She hoped that the Grid she saw in the crystal ball would use the enhanced magic she wanted.

However, Goldhit still didn't know... Grid was actually an expert at destroying common sense.

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*Peok!*

*Kwajajak!*

‘It isn’t painful.’

The distressed Grid felt Khan’s presence every time he was hit by the guardians’ punches and kicks. It was because the work Khan left behind was protecting Grid. Valhalla emitted a little bit of smoke every time the guardian hit Grid, but only Grid knew what it was the precursor of.

*Chukakakakak!*

*Peeng!*

Grid cut at the guardian’s chest while accumulating minor damage and smiled.

*Jeeeeeeong!*

The guardian’s fist firmly hit Grid’s arm, and green smoke emerged from the armor. It was now a fog.

“This...!” Goldhit, who had been watching closely in order to not miss the moment when Grid used magic, was shocked and stood up. She noticed it. The identity of this fog was poison!

*Shaaaaah-*

It was the poison that Kyleo had completed after many experiments. The powerful poison, which was hard to resist, filled the 16th floor. It was an option attached to Khan’s armor. The lilith guardian suddenly lost its destructive momentum. It couldn’t resist the poison. Not only did its health drop, but its movements also became dull. The unidentified metals which made up its body quickly rusted.

“This is ridiculous!”

To think that Grid had a powerful magic armor as well as a magic weapon? It even caused reflective damage? Goldhit was nervous as Grid quickly cleared the 16th, 17th,

and 18th floors with the help of the armor. He was now entering the 19th floor.

It was the last gateway. If Grid broke through the 19th floor, he would reach the 20th floor. However, in the end...

*-Expand the gateways by 10 more!* Goldhit's urgent voice rang in the minds of the tower's magicians. Her disciples were upset.

*-Aren't you giving an outsider too many benefits?*

*-Master, the internal backlash will be great.*

The essence of knowledge, which was obtained every time the tower was climbed, was incredibly large. Therefore, climbing the tower had great meaning. The magicians of the Tower of Eternity studied hard in order to qualify to climb the tower. Yet Goldhit was giving preferential treatment to Grid, an outsider.

Goldhit asked the worried disciples,

*-How many people can climb the tower even if they qualify? This is a trial, not preferential treatment. No matter how much I increase the gateways, it will be pointless if Grid fails. And Grid...*

He was rising. He kept continuing to rise! Even without magic!

“Dammit...!”

Goldhit had been blocked by a wall for decades. The lack of development meant the past few years of Goldhit's life had been hell. Her only hope was Grid. However, the problem was that Grid wasn't a person whose actions could be predicted.

[Grid is on the 24th floor.]

[Grid is on the 25th floor.]

[Grid is on the 26th...]

.....

.....

“...No, is he still not using magic?”

Who could imagine that the strongest magician on the continent would be sulking like a child? Even Grid couldn't imagine that despite him making Goldhit like this.

[A new gateway has opened. Please challenge up to the 40th floor!]

“Is this heaven?”

The gateways kept being generated, and he kept getting rewards! Grid had secured 40 intelligence in just three hours. The smile couldn't disappear from his face. He was extremely happy.



PtFF by: traktorA7EN